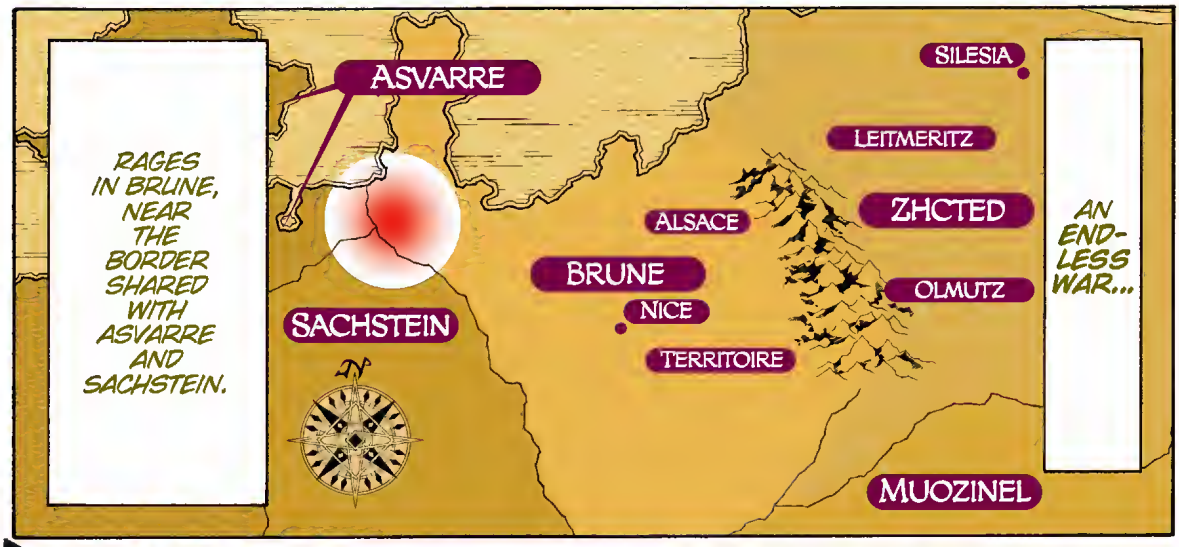
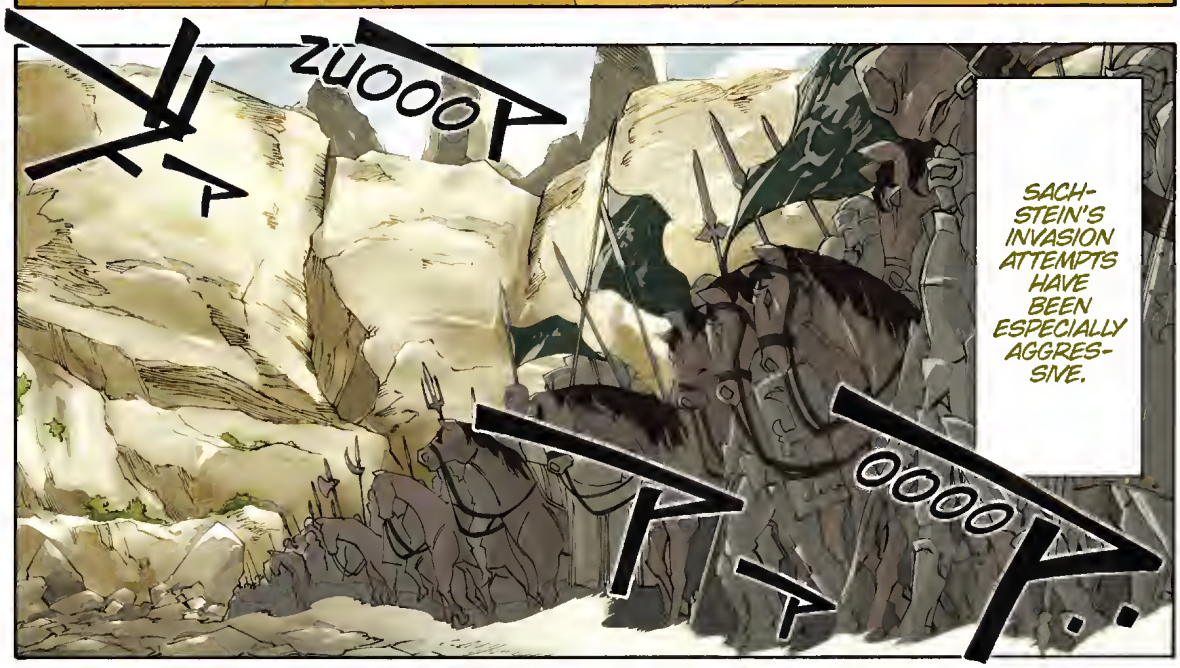
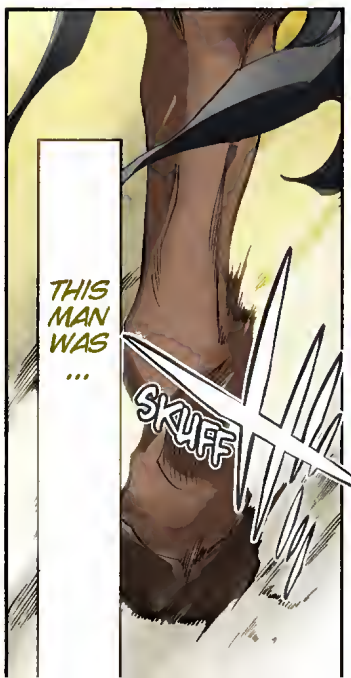
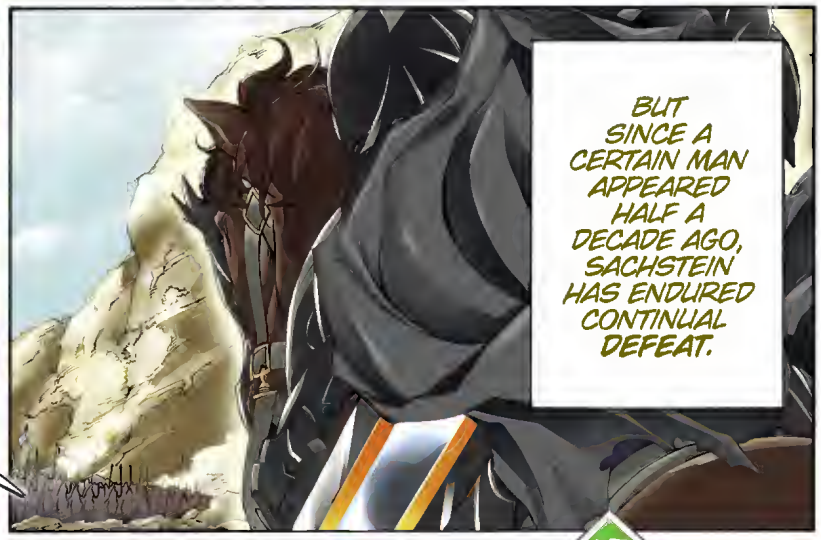
story by
TSUKASA
KAWAGUCHI
art by
NOBUHIKO
YANAI
4
Lord Marksman
and Vanadis


RAGES IN BRUNE, NEAR THE BORDER SHARED WITH ASVARRE AND SACHSTEIN.
ASVARRE
SILESIA
LEITMERITZ
ZHCTED
ALSACE
BRUNE
OLMUTZ
NICE
SACHSTEIN
TERRITOIRE
MUOZINEL
AN END-LESS WAR...


ZUOOOP
OOOOP
SACH-STEIN'S INVASION ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY AGGRES-SIVE.


THIS MAN WAS ...
SKUFF


BUT SINCE A CERTAIN MAN APPEARED HALF A DECADE AGO, SACHSTEIN HAS ENDURED CONTINUAL DEFEAT.

Lord Marksman and Vanadis
4
Art: NOBUHIKO YANAI
Story: TSUKASA KAWAGUCHI
Character Design: YOSHI☆WO

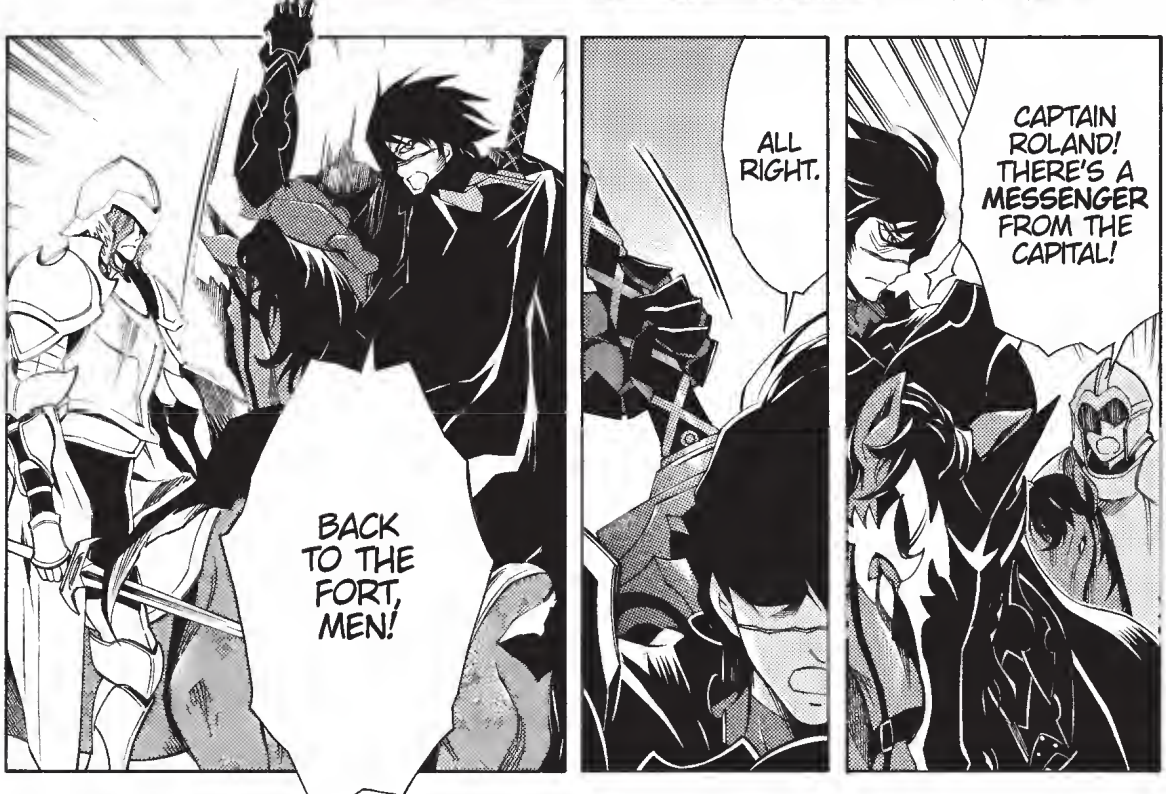
MARCH AGAINST US AGAIN! THEY SHOULD KNOW BETTER!
VERMIN FROM SACH-STEIN...
BRUNE'S FEARED SWORDS-MAN...
IT'S HIM ...!
THE BLACK KNIGHT!
WHOA!
THAT'S HIM!
FULL SPEED!
THERE'S JUST ONE HORSE-MAN!
GRRIP
ROLAND, THE BLACK KNIGHT.

O WAR GOD TYR, BLESS US!
ROOOAARRR!!!
ATTACK ...!!

DHWOOM
GRRAAASH
!!
PRESS ONNN !!!
DWOMP
EAGH!
YAUGH!
CLANG
BAM
AGH!
CLASH
AUGH!
BOOM
GWAMM
BWOOM
BOOM
YAH!
SUH-LASH

YAHHHHHH!!!
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
!
WRAAARR!!
IS THAT THE ORDER OF NAVARRE ?!
THEY WERE AT THE CLIFF ...!
R-ROLAND WAS A DECOY ...?!
FOLLOW CAPTAIN ROLAND !!!
DAMN!
WITH-DRAW!
WITH-DRAW!
RE-TREAT !!
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
RETREEEAT!!!

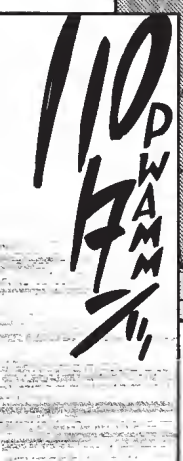
YAAAAARRRGH!!
CLOP
CLOP
WERE WE TOO HASTY?
OLIVIER
THE ORDER OF NAVARRE'S LIEUTENANT
GRIT
THEY WERE NOSING IN ON OUR CIVIL WAR.
WHERE ARE THOSE CASTLE-BOUND NOBLES IDLING, WHILE WE DRIVE INVADERS FROM THE BORDERS?


CAPTAIN ROLAND! THERE'S A MESSENGER FROM THE CAPITAL!
ALL RIGHT.
BACK TO THE FORT, MEN!

WE'LL MAKE FOR NICE POST-HASTE.
ALERT DUKE THENAR-DIER.
I WILL, SIR.

THIS ALL MAKES SENSE.
RUSTLE

EX-USE ME.


DWAMM

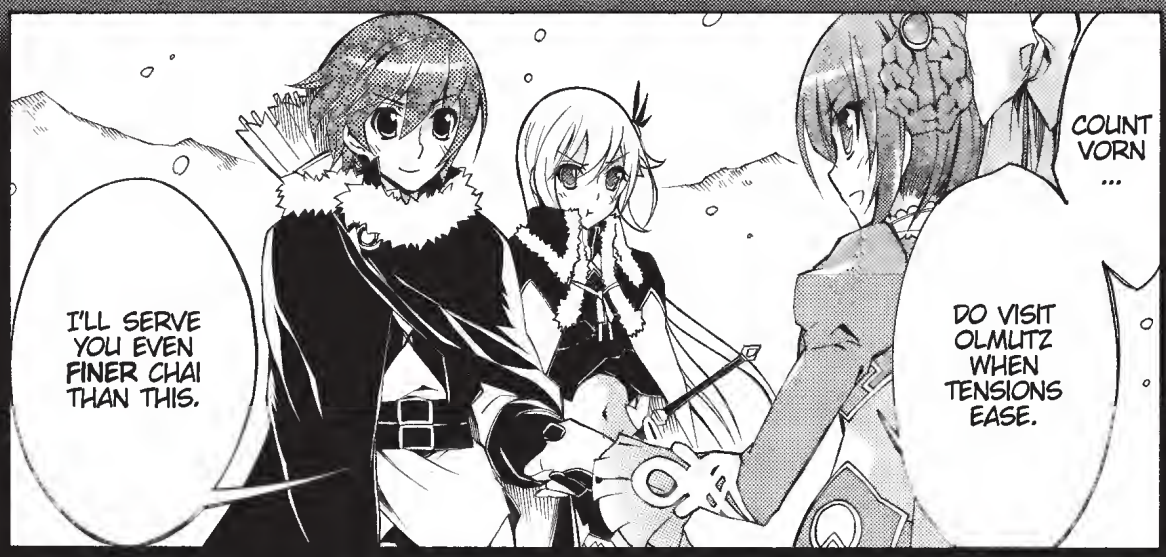
SOME "COUNT VORN" HAS REBELLED.
HE'S LET ZHCTED TROOPS ON BRUNISH SOIL.
WHAT ...?!
WE'RE TO SUBDUE A TRAITOR.
TRAITOR ?
DUKE THENAR-DIER WILL ARRANGE A TRUCE WITH ASVARRE AND SACH-STEIN.
WHAT WILL BECOME OF THIS BORDER IN OUR ABSENCE, THEN?
THENAR-DIER'S SENDING US ALL!
DAMMIT!
WHY CAN'T THENAR-DIER HANDLE THIS?!

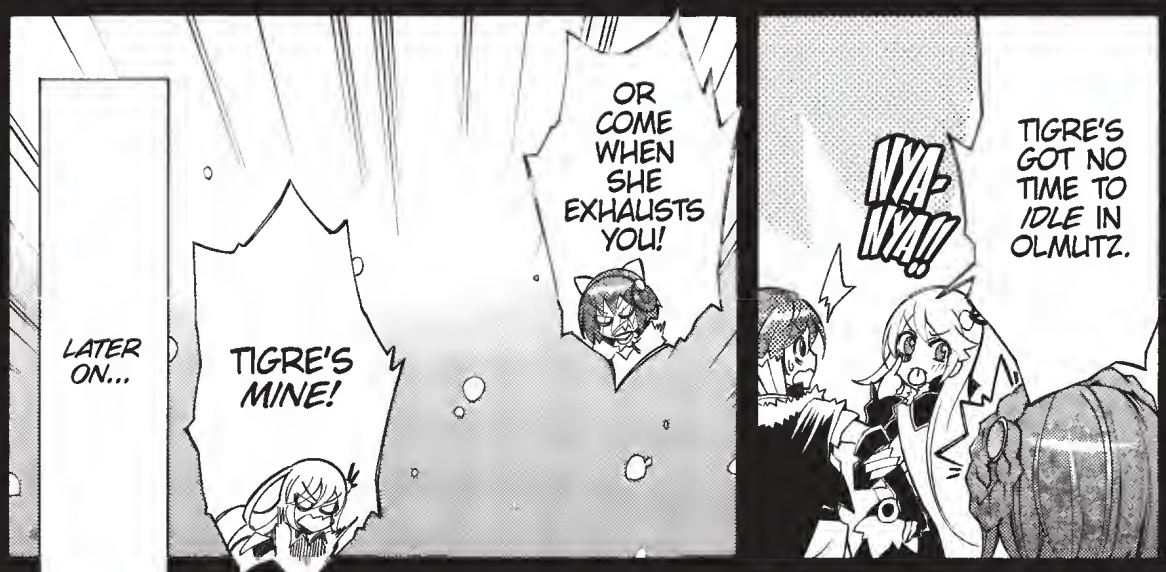
THEY SAY VORN'S FIVE THOUSAND ZHCTED SOLDIERS ...
ARE BULWARKED BY A FEARSOME WAR MAIDEN.
THE WHOLE ORDER OF NAVARRE ?!
YOU REALIZE THAT WILL EMPTY THIS FORT?!
IT'S JUST RUMOR...
BUT EVEN SO, WE'D BEST TROUNCE THEM SWIFTLY.
THAT...
WILL ALLOW THE DUKE TO CONCEN-TRATE ON DIPLOMACY.

WE'LL HEAD TO THE CAPITAL FIRST.
THEN...
AFTER NICE, WE'LL MAKE FOR VORN'S STRONG-HOLD IN TERRITOIRE.
FOR BRUNE'S SAKE...
WE'LL *WIPE OUT* THE KING'S FOE.

ORANGE PLAINS, WEST OF TERRITOIRE.
MMN...
WINTER'S ROLLING IN. IT'S GETTING NIPPY.
NOT COLD LIKE ZHCTED, THOUGH.

THIS SNOW REMINDS ME OF THE SKIRMISH AT TATRA FORTRESS.
WHEN THAT BATTLE ENDED...
LUDMILA DECLARED NEUTRALITY.


COUNT VORN ...
DO VISIT OLMUTZ WHEN TENSIONS EASE.
I'LL SERVE YOU EVEN FINER CHAI THAN THIS.


TIGRE'S GOT NO TIME TO IDLE IN OLMUTZ.
NYA-NYA!!
OR COME WHEN SHE EXHAUSTS YOU!
TIGRE'S MINE!
LATER ON...

GLAD YOU'RE SAFE, COUNT VORN.
VISCOUNT AUGRE!
ELEN, HER TROOPS, AND TIGRE RETURNED TO ALSACE.
LORD TIGRE!!
THIS TIME I'M COMING, TOO!!
BOLSTERED BY VISCOUNT AUGRE'S TROOPS, THEY HEADED WEST OF TERRITOIRE.
I SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW, AND FOUND A THOUSAND MEN.
THEY'RE AT YOUR DISPOS-AL.
ELEN AND TIGRE HAD THEM CAMP AT ORANGE PLAINS.

YAWN...
!
GOOD MORNING.
GOOD MORNING, LADY ELEO-NORA.
EEP!
YOU'RE UP EARLY.
OH.
G-GOOD MORNING.
FETCH-ING WATER?
I'LL JOIN YOU. IT'S NOT SAFE ALONE.
THANK YOU...

HYUUUUU
ACHOO!
GOT A CHILL?
SHHFF
TH-THANK YOU.
BUT AREN'T YOU COLD?
I'M FINE.
COMPARED TO ZHCTED'S WINTER, THIS'S NOTHING.

MAY I ASK SOMETHING?
YOUR NAME'S TITTA, YES?
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH TIGRE, RIGHT?
WHAT IS IT...?
WHAA --?!
BLUSH

WHY...
WHY DO YOU ASK?!
NO NEED FOR THE VAPORS.
PLENTY OF MAIDS FALL FOR THEIR MASTERS.
I...
ADMIRE LORD TIGRE VERY MUCH.
IN A PLATONIC WAY!
IS THAT SO?
AND HAS HE WON ANY OTHER HEARTS?
NOT ...
THAT I KNOW OF.
LORD TIGRE'S QUITE UP-STANDING!
SO THERE!
HE'S SIXTEEN, JUST LIKE ME. THERE MUST BE SOME GOSSIP!
HE CAN'T BE COMPLETELY PURE-MINDED.

NAKED ...?!
HE WAS CERTAINLY INTERESTED WHEN HE SAW ME NAKED.
HE BUMBLED IN WHILE I WAS BATHING.
A MISTAKE, OF COURSE.
SNICKER!
.....
WHY THIS CURIOSITY ABOUT TIGRE?

DO YOU LOVE HIM, TOO?
……

WELL...
I DON'T HATE HIM.
I GUESS.
SO IT IS LOVE?
PLEASE. NOT HATING HIM IS HARDLY LOVE.
AND IF I DID LOVE HIM...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
WELL...
I DON'T KNOW.
WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT...
I JUST WANT HIM TO BE HAPPY.
SO ...
HE'LL ALWAYS HAVE ME.
BUT...
DON'T YOU DARE TOY WITH HIM!

WH...
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
PFFT!
TEHEE
TEHEE
SORRY IF I SEEM FLIPPANT.
.....
DON'T LOSE SLEEP OVER IT.
EVEN IF I LOVED TIGRE...
WELL, WE'RE MIS-MATCHED.
TOP TO BOTTOM.
.....

SHE MEANS THEY HAVE DIFFERENT STATIONS IN LIFE.
IT'S TRUE. YET...
LORD TIGRE...
DIDN'T FALTER WHEN ALSACE'S FORMER LORD DIED.
HE, THE BEREAVED SON, ARRANGED HIS FATHER'S FUNERAL. SINCE THEN, HE'S WORKED TIRELESSLY.
BUT HIS OUTLOOK HASN'T CHANGED.
THAT'S WHY HE WAS EASY TO SERVE.

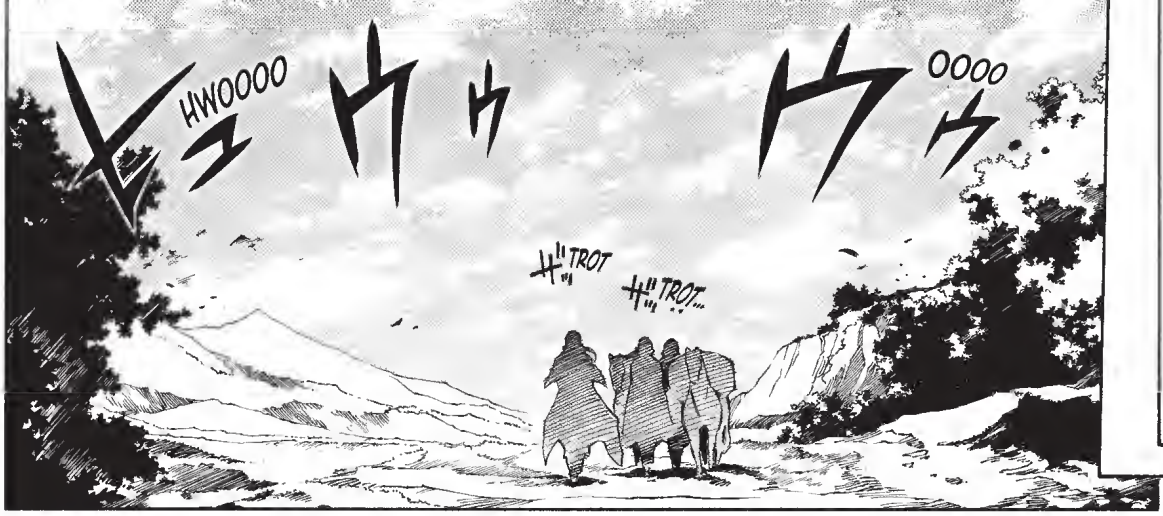
I SEE...
KNOWING HIS PAST...
DROVE ME TO HELP TIGRE HOWEVER I COULD.
THANKS.
I LIKE HIM EVEN MORE NOW.
HUH?!
HEE HEE!
DON'T WORRY.
WHEN I RETURN TO ZHCTED, I'LL BRING YOU ALONG.

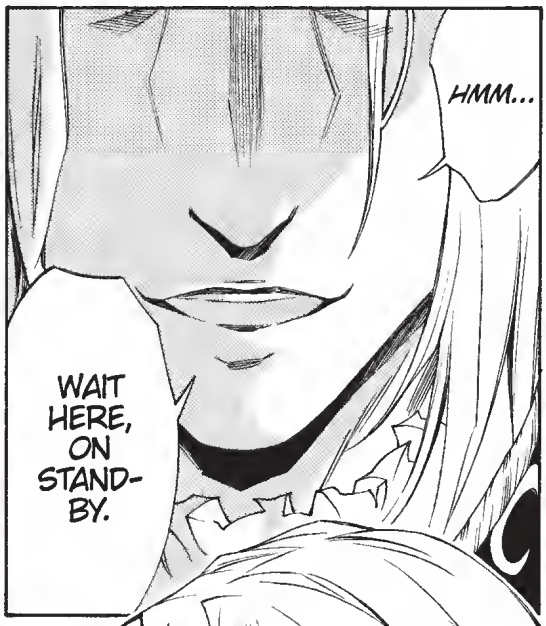
NOW...
HOW TO HANDLE THIS?
SNORE...
SNORE...
I'D PREFER LADY ELEONORA FIND HIM AWAKE.
HE SLEEPS LIKE A LOG.
GRUM...

WAKE UP, SIR TIGRE-VURMUD!
SHAKE...
RISE AND SHINE!
OVER-SLEEPING'S NO EXAMPLE TO SET FOR YOUR TROOPS!
SHAKE
SHAKE...
.....
SNORE~
SNRE~...
HE WAS UP QUICK ENOUGH WHEN I PUT A SWORD BETWEEN HIS LIPS.
BACK THEN, I STILL RESENTED HIS HOSTAGE STATUS.
BUT NOW ...
55T...
IT'S SO STRANGE.

RRIP
EEK ...!
BWISK
WINCE
WAKE UP, TIGRE!
I'M HERE TO GET YOU OUT OF BED MYSELF!
EEAUGH!!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
9!!
DASH
LORD TIGRE!
JUST DON'T PLUCK ME BALD.
I'M ALL RIGHT.
OW.
BUT I DIDN'T!!
YOU MUSTN'T PULL HIS HAIR OUT JUST FOR SLEEPING LATE.

I'M SO SORRY!
FLUUSH
TEE HEE!
WELL, NOW.
SINCE YOU'RE AWAKE...
LET'S REVIEW OUR PLAN OF ACTION.





※ One belsta is about half a mile.

CHAPTER 17: END

18 ◆ MARQUIS GREAST

FOUR DAYS AGO, WE MADE CAMP AT ORANGE PLAINS.
HOW'S TROOP MORALE?

WELL...
THERE'S SQUABBLING AMONGST THE SOLDIERS.
AND I THINK WE'RE PUTTING SIGNIFICANT DENTS IN OUR FOOD AND FUEL STORES.
THANKS, TITTA.
CLACK
WHICH IS PARTIALLY YOUR DOING.
REMEMBER THAT.
THIS SPREAD WAS HARDLY FREE.
YES...
OH, AND LIM...
WHEN YOU SAID "WE" MADE CAMP...
YOU NEGLECTED TO USE THE MONIKER CHOSEN AT OUR MEETING.
SQUIRM

A FEW DAYS AGO...
UGH.
SAY IT!
GO ON.
NOW, THEN...
WHAT SHALL WE CALL THIS BRUNE-ZHCTED COALITION?
IT'S LED BY SIR TIGRE-VURMUD AND LADY ELEONORA, SO...
PERHAPS THE ALSACE-LEITMERITZ ALLIANCE?
WE MUSTN'T IGNORE VISCOUNT AUGRE AND OUR OTHER NOBLE ALLIES.
MAYBE THE BRUNISH LORDS AND LEITMERITZ COALITION FORCE?
NO!
THAT'S WORDY AND DULL!
OUR MEN WILL SCOFF!
I'M THINKING SOME-THING LIKE...

BA-
SROOM!!
SILVER METEOR FORCE!!
"SILVER METEOR FORCE"...
WE WENT WITH IT, BUT IT'S SO DRAMATIC.
LET'S HEAR IT!
SILVER... METEOR...
HEY...
HOW ARE OUR FOOD AND FUEL SUPPLIES HOLDING UP?
EXCUSE THE INTERRUPTION.
RUSTLE
WHEW

CLATTER
WHAT'S THE ISSUE NOW, RURICK?
HAAH...
COUNT VORN, THE SOLDIERS ARE BICKERING AGAIN.
I NEED TO STEP OUT BRIEFLY.
ALL RIGHT.
BUSINESS AS USUAL, HMM? DON'T BE LONG.
WELL?
WHAT'S TODAY'S QUARREL ABOUT?

LOOK!
THE CLOUDS.
I'VE JUST LEARNED ...
THE BRUNISH BELIEVE CLOUDS ARE HOOFPRINTS OF THE SACRED HORSE, BAYARD. RIGHT?
YES. SO WHAT?
MY PEOPLE SAY CLOUDS COME FROM ZIRNITRA, THE BLACK DRAGON.
I SEE.
THEY'RE CERTAINLY PICKING THE PETTIEST OF FIGHTS...

THAT'S THEM?
NO!
SQUABBLE
SQUABBLE
YOINK
YOU'RE AIMING FOR THEIR FEET?
NO, NO.
CREEEAK
THIS IS CALLED A "WHISTLING ARROW."
COURTESY OF VISCOUNT AUGRE.
LET'S TRY THIS.

HYIIIIGH
PHAAAM
PHAAAM

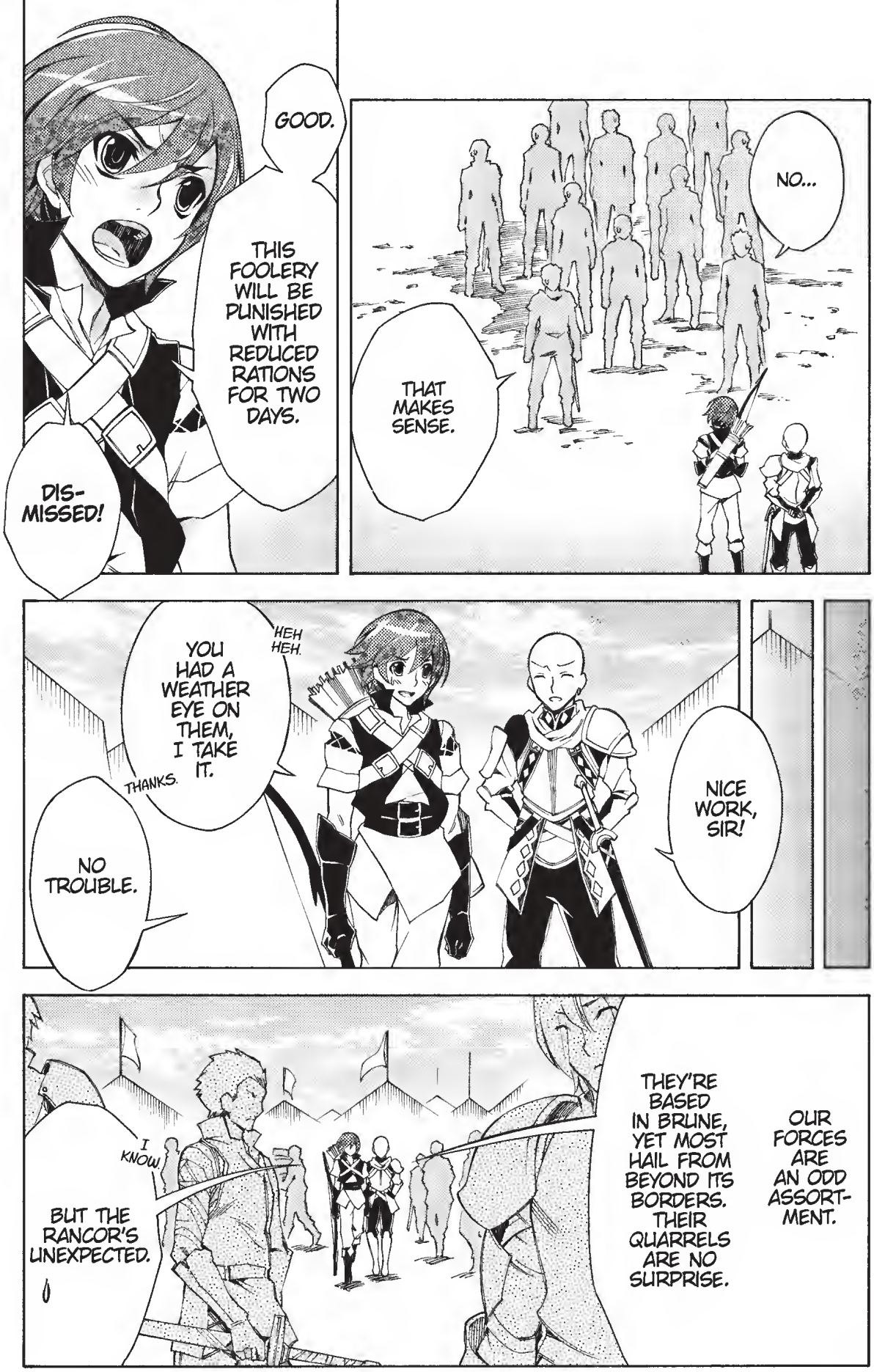
SILENCE...
WHAT THE...?!
.....
ARGUING AGAIN?!
MUTTER
MUTTER
UH...
URGH.
COUNT VORN...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FIGHTING ABOUT.

YOU'RE UP IN ARMS OVER WHETHER BAYARD OR ZIRNITRA MADE THOSE CLOUDS.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
NOD
NOD
Y-YES, SIR.

HUH?..
.....
GUUR...
NOD

THEY BOTH DID.

IT STANDS TO REASON *BOTH* EXIST.
I'VE NEVER HEARD IT CLAIMED...
THAT BAYARD OR ZIRNITRA WAS *SOLE OWNER* OF THE SKY, EXILING ALL OTHERS.
.....!
WHA--?
どぉぉ
MURMUR
UHH...
SHOULD ANYONE OBJECT TO MY THEORY, APPEAL TO BAYARD OR ZIRNITRA FOR THE TRUTH.
OR, IF *THAT'S* A TALL ORDER, HASH THINGS OUT WITH ME.
チラ...
GLANCE...
.....


GOOD.
THIS FOOLERY WILL BE PUNISHED WITH REDUCED RATIONS FOR TWO DAYS.
DIS-MISSED!
NO...
THAT MAKES SENSE.
HEH HEH.
YOU HAD A WEATHER EYE ON THEM, I TAKE IT.
THANKS.
NO TROUBLE.
NICE WORK, SIR!
I KNOW.
BUT THE RANCOR'S UNEXPECTED.
THEY'RE BASED IN BRUNE, YET MOST HAIL FROM BEYOND ITS BORDERS. THEIR QUARRELS ARE NO SURPRISE.
OUR FORCES ARE AN ODD ASSORT-MENT.

THE KING MUST APPROVE WHATEVER MOVE I MAKE.
ON TOP OF FOOD AND FUEL ISSUES, THERE'S BEEN RAMPANT INFIGHTING.
IN A FEW DAYS, WE'LL ARRIVE AT NEMETACUM... DUKE THENARDIER'S TERRITORY.
I ALMOST WISH WE WERE AT WAR NOW.
HEH HEH...
I'LL HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR BRINGING ZHCTED FORCES TO BRUNE.
JUSTIFY THE CHOICE.
DID SIR MASHAS MANAGE TO DELIVER MY LETTER?
COUNT VORN!
CLANK CLANK

GREAST ...?
DID HE COME ALONE?
AYE.
SOMEONE CALLED "MARQUIS GREAST" HAS ARRIVED.
HE'S REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE.
I DON'T KNOW THE NAME. BUT A MARQUIS MUST BE MET WITH RESPECT.
LET'S VISIT VISCOUNT AUGRE.
ALL RIGHT.
SET A TABLE AND CHAIRS SOME TWO HUNDRED ALSINS AWAY.
TELL HIM I'LL GREET HIM SHORTLY.
YES, SIR!

GREAST, YOU SAID?!
DO YOU KNOW HIM?
WE'VE BRUSHED ELBOWS.
HE'S DUKE GANELON'S RIGHT-HAND MAN!
MASHAS MENTIONED HIM IN THE LETTER YOU GAVE ME.

GANELON'S ARMY MARCHED ON ALSACE AT THE SAME TIME AS THENARDIER'S.
THEY WERE LED BY MARQUIS GREAST.
!
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
THIS COULD BE AN IMPOSTER.
SO, IF SIR MASHAS HADN'T STOPPED HIM...
HE MIGHT'VE ATTACKED ALSACE BEFORE ZION DID!
THANK YOU.

MARQUIS GREAST
COMMANDER OF
DUKE GANELON'S
ARMY
PSST...
THAT'S TRULY THE MARQUIS.
I'M HONORED TO MEET YOU, MARQUIS GREAST.
I'M THE HEAD OF CLAN VORN, TIGREVURMUD.

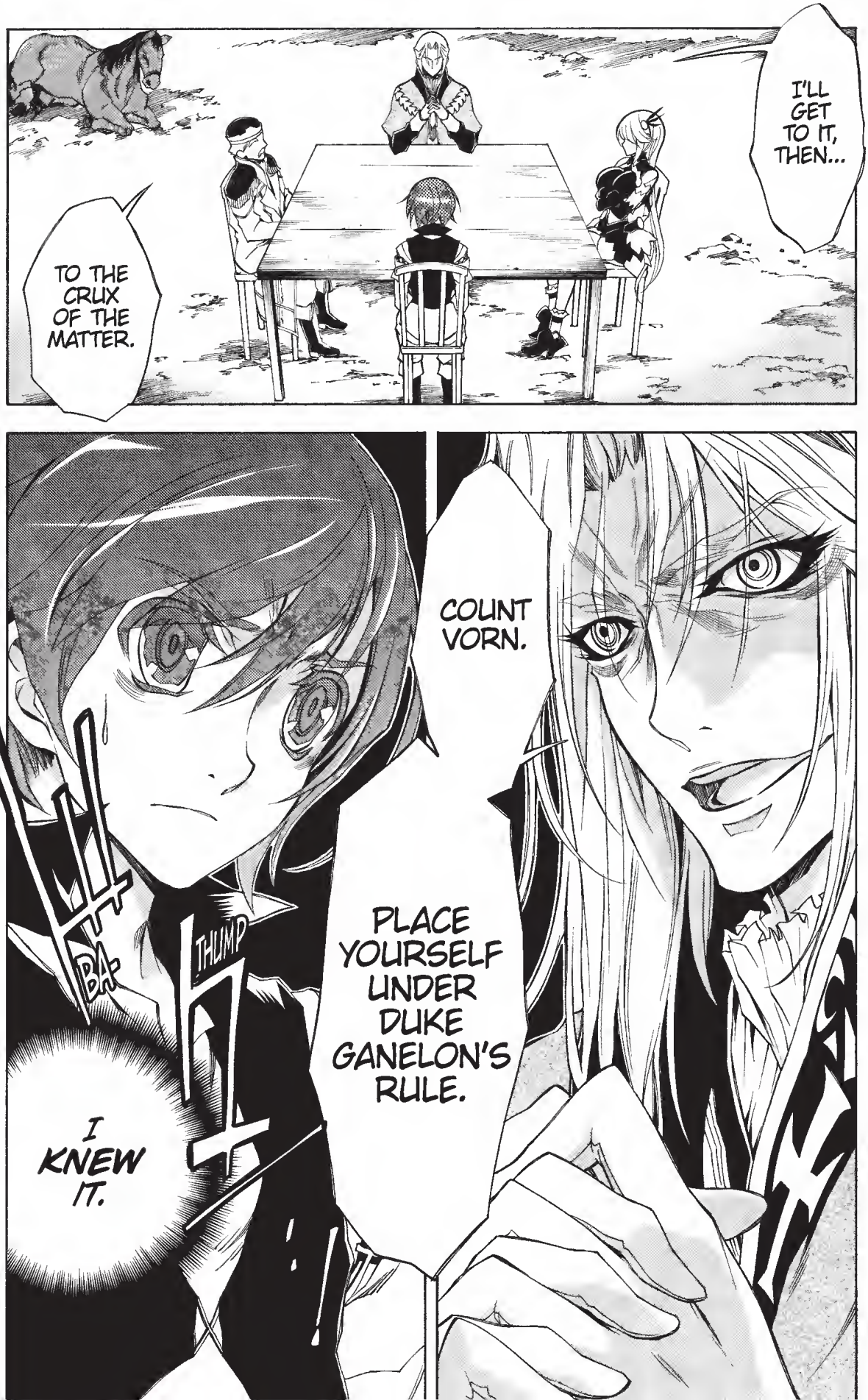
IT'S A PLEASURE, COUNT VORN.
I'M CHARON ANQUETIL GREAST.
AH, VISCOUNT AUGRE.
I THOUGHT YOU'D RETIRED.
IT'S BEEN SOME TIME.
I'M A ZHCTED WAR MAIDEN.
ELEONORA VILTARIA.
REALLY?

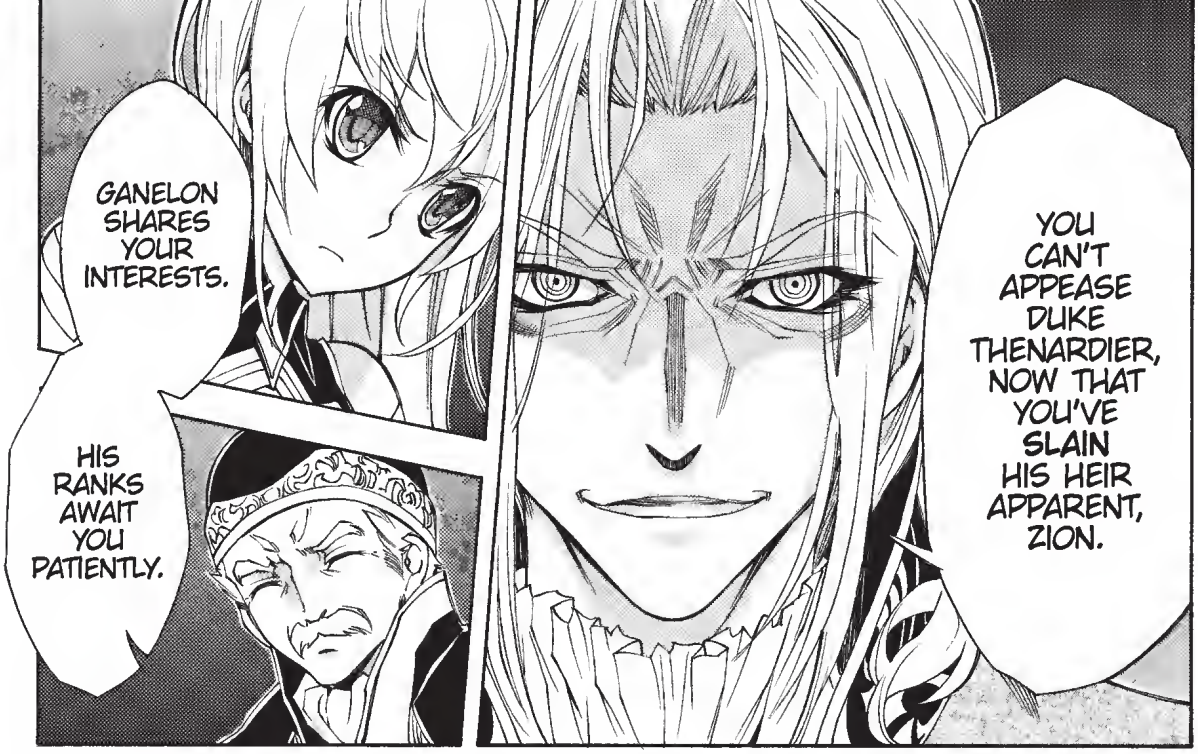
SO YOU'RE THE MIGHTY MAIDEN WHO ROUTED US AT DINANT PLAINS!
I WON-DERED ABOUT YOU.
YOU'D SUIT A SILK GOWN BETTER THAN A SWORD, GIVEN YOUR CHARMS.
WHISH
WHAT A SURPRISE.

IN THE CAPITAL, NICE, THEY SAY...
YOU FEARLESSLY STRUCK DOWN A DRAGON.
PERHAPS IT WAS FELLED BY YOUR BEAUTY?
SQUEEZE

CARESS
SHUD-
DER-
!
BUT WHY LEND YOUR STRENGTH TO COUNT VORN?
STROKE
STROKE...

I WAS HIRED TO SEE HIS JUSTICE SERVED.
FONDLE
STROKE
STROKE
STROKE
OH?
YOU THINK HIS SIDE IS THE JUST ONE?
HMM.
IT DOESN'T SEEM TO ME THAT YOU TWO ARE INTIMATE.
YOU TELL THE TRUTH, DOUBTLESS.
PERHAPS HIS LOWLY RANK IS TO BLAME.
LORD GREAST.
SURELY YOU DIDN'T COME SO FAR TO SPEAK TO ME.
WHY NOT CUT TO THE CHASE?
PLEASE BE SEATED, MILORD.
B.WISH


I'LL GET TO IT, THEN...
TO THE CRUX OF THE MATTER.
COUNT VORN.
PLACE YOURSELF UNDER DUKE GANELON'S RULE.
I KNEW IT.
THUMP
BA-

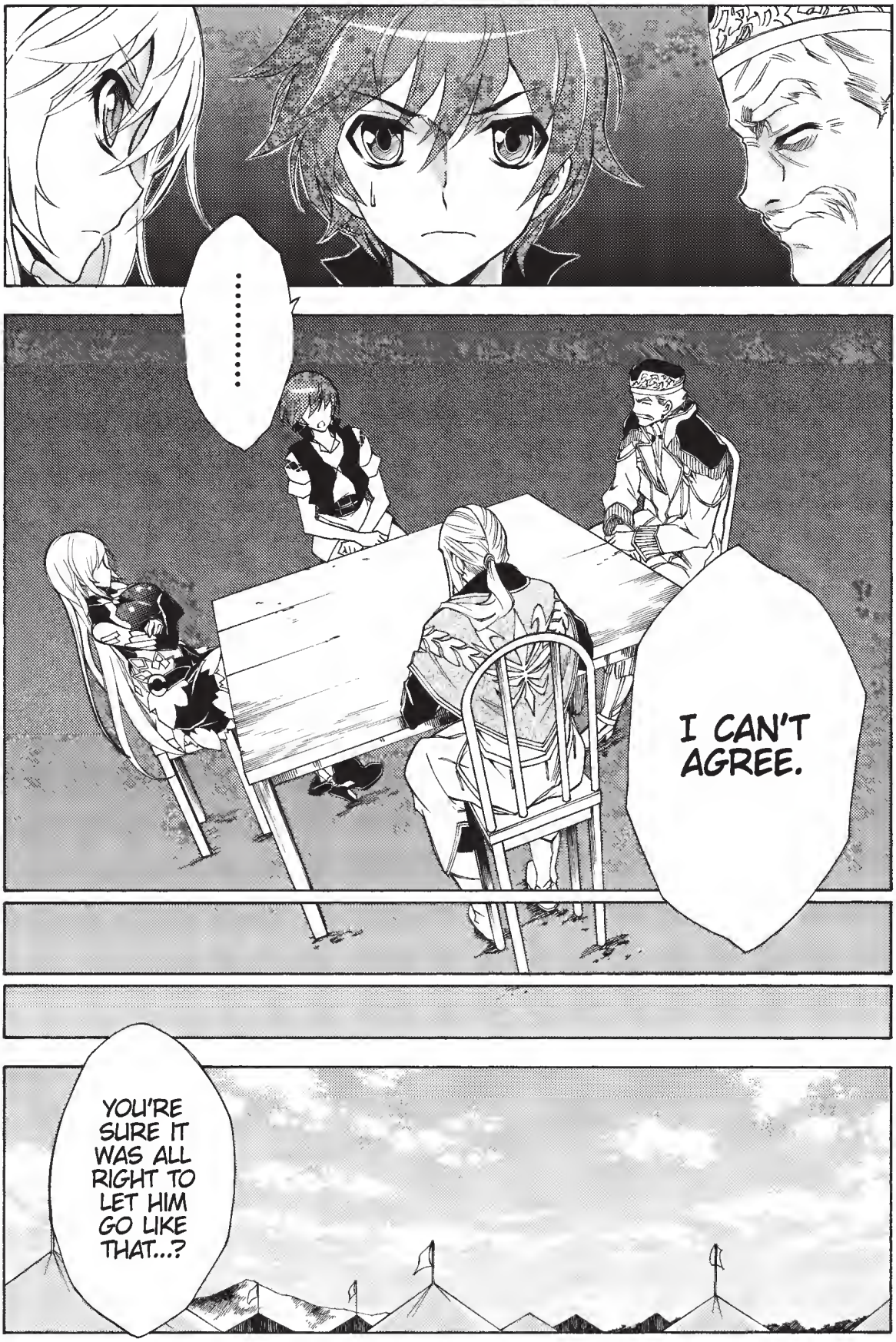

YOU CAN'T APPEASE DUKE THENARDIER, NOW THAT YOU'VE SLAIN HIS HEIR APPARENT, ZION.
GANELON SHARES YOUR INTERESTS.
HIS RANKS AWAIT YOU PATIENTLY.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING YOU'LL BE COMPEN-SATED.
COMPEN-SATED...?
YES.
IN GANELON'S OWN WORDS...

DUKE THENARDIER RULES NEMETACUM. IN TIME, WE'LL CAPTURE ITS CAPITAL CITY, RANCE.
ONCE RANCE FALLS, THE FORCES THAT BESIEGED IT...
WILL EACH HAVE A DAY TO PLUNDER.

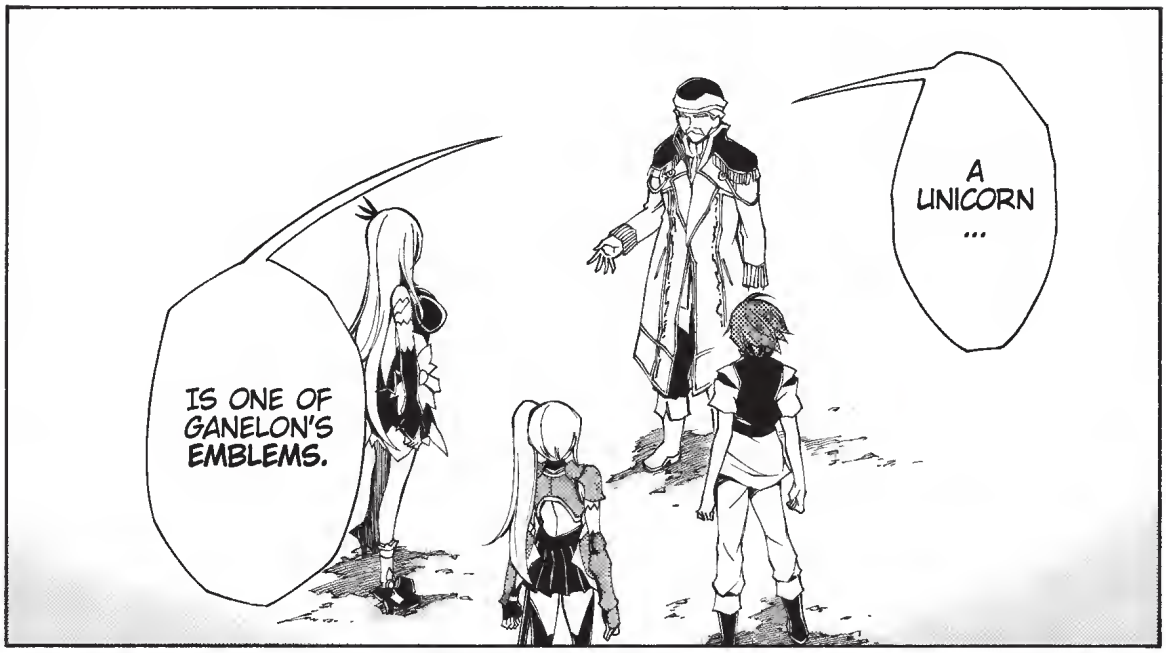
A DAY TO...
PLUNDER ?!
BUT THERE ARE DUTIES, TOO.
YOU MUST PERMIT REQUISI-TIONS...
CLENCH...
HANDING OVER FOOD AND FUEL AS ORDERED.
REFUSAL IS BARRED; RESISTORS WILL BE ELIMINATED.
DON'T BE NAïVE.
FALLEN CITIES HAVE BEEN LOOTED AND DESTROYED SINCE OUR ANCESTORS' WARS.
TORTURE, THEFT, VANDALISM ...
ALL FAIR GAME.

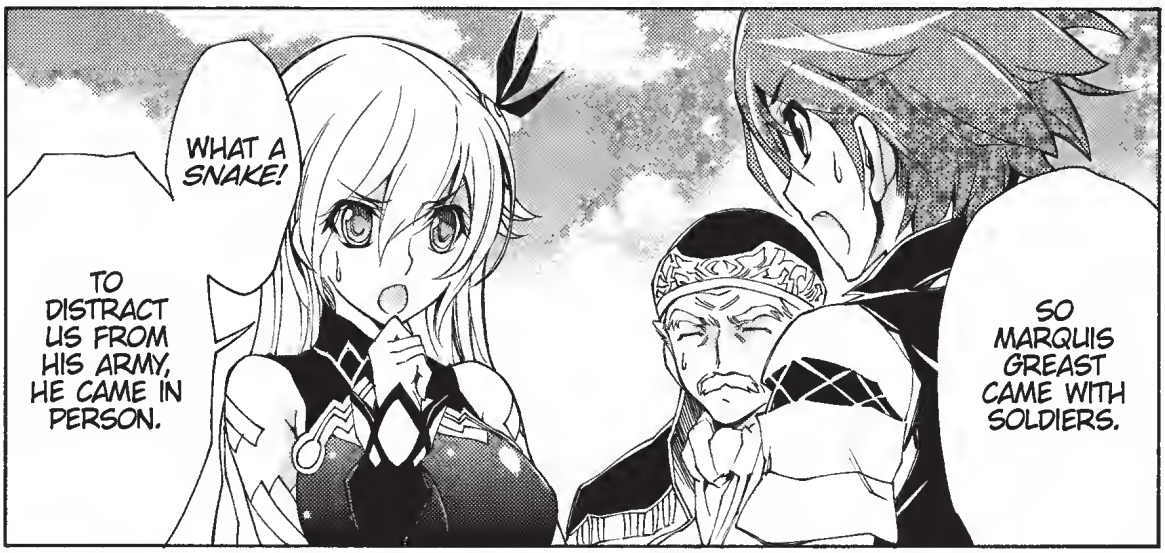
I UNDERSTAND YOUR OFFER.
MAY I DISCUSS IT WITH MY FOLLOWERS, AND DECIDE TOMORROW?
YOU MUST ALSO JOIN BATTLE.
YOU'LL LEAD MEN ONTO THE FIELD... QUITE AN HONOR.
THEY WANT TO GET HIM KILLED ...!
NO. I WANT YOUR ANSWER NOW...
COUNT VORN.
WE'RE NOT PLEADING FOR ASSISTANCE.
WE WANT HOMAGE.
STARE
WILL YOU FOLLOW DUKE GANELON OR NOT? I NEED YOUR ANSWER.
DEMURRING WON'T BE ALLOWED.


.....
I CAN'T AGREE.
YOU'RE SURE IT WAS ALL RIGHT TO LET HIM GO LIKE THAT...?

YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM?
YES.
THEN BURIED HIM FACE-LESS ...
SWORN OUR SOLDIERS TO SECRECY, AND PRE-TENDED HE NEVER SHOWED UP.
SIR MASHAS' WORDS SUGGESTED MARQUIS GREAST IS CUNNING.
I DOUBT HE CAME ALONE ON A WHIM.
I SECOND THAT. WHAT ELEN SUGGESTS MIGHT'VE ALLOWED DUKE GANELON TO MOVE AGAINST US, USING GREAST'S FATE AS A PRETEXT.
PERHAPS THAT'S TRUE.
LADY ELEONORA!

AN ARMY OF SIX THOUSAND HAS BEEN REPORTED ABOUT A DAY'S MARCH NORTH!
TMP
TMP
WHAT?!
THEIR FLAG WAS GREEN, WITH THE HORNED GOLD HORSE...
CALLED A UNICORN BY THE BRUNISH!
UNI-CORN ?!
!
THAT CREST...
IS DUKE GANELON'S!
CHAPTER 18: END

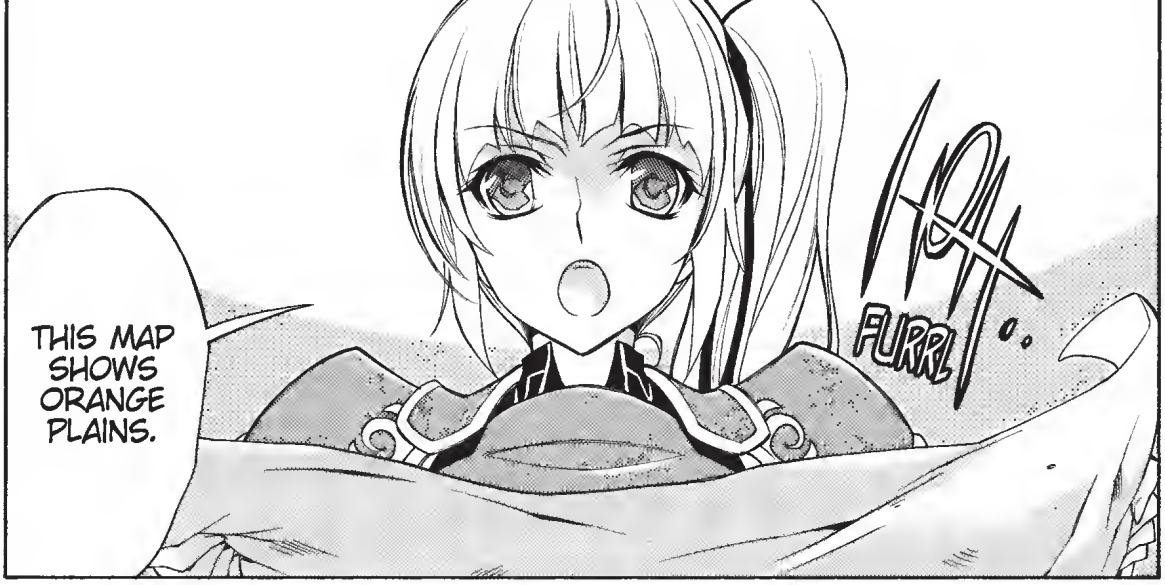

A UNICORN ...
IS ONE OF GANELON'S EMBLEMS.

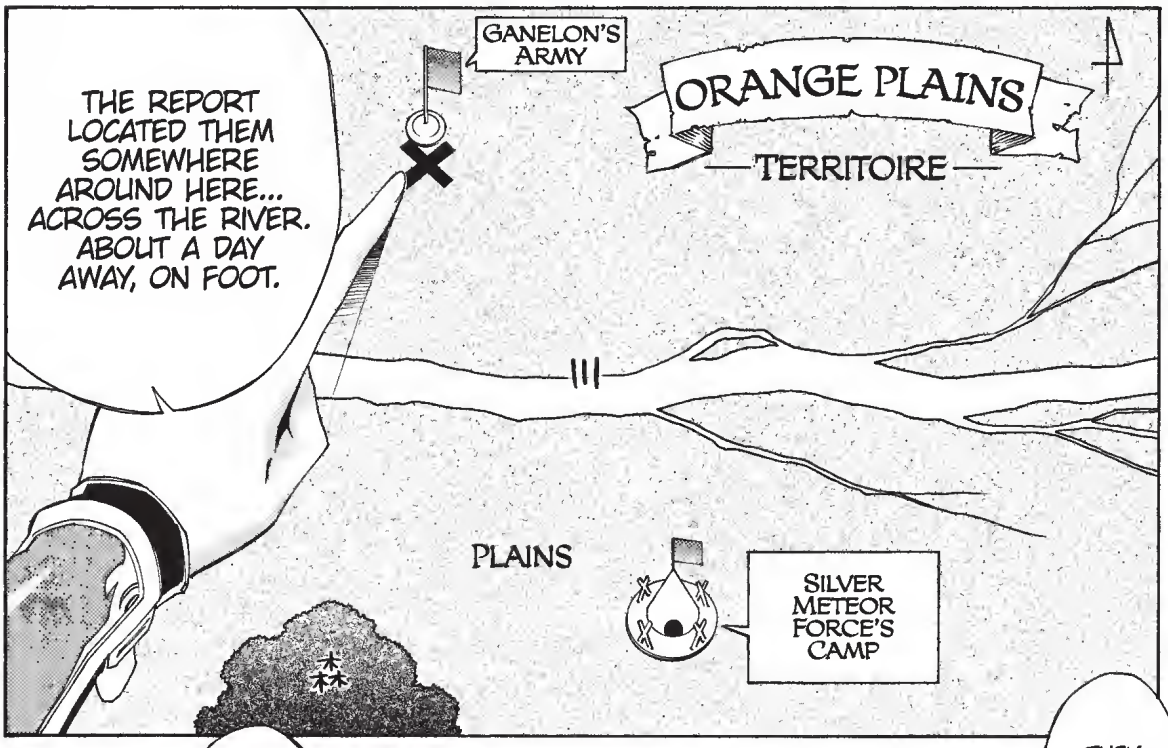

WHAT A SNAKE!
TO DISTRACT US FROM HIS ARMY, HE CAME IN PERSON.
SO MARQUIS GREAST CAME WITH SOLDIERS.

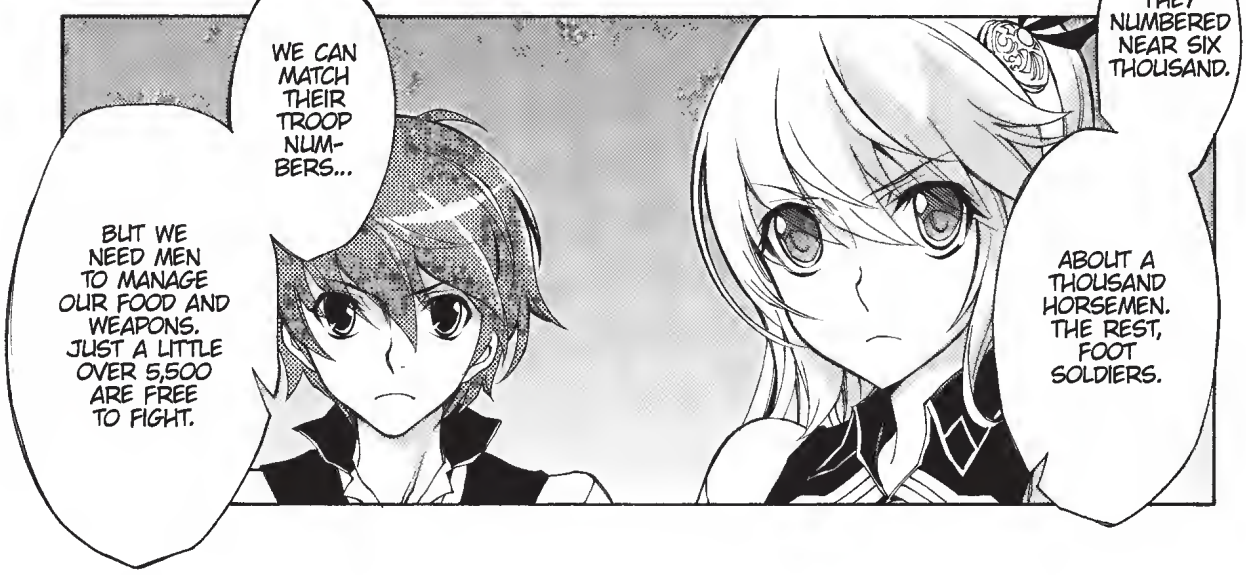
COME ON!
LET'S GET TO MY TENT FOR A CRISIS MEETING!

I'VE ORDERED OUR MEN TO LEAVE THE CAMP.
WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?

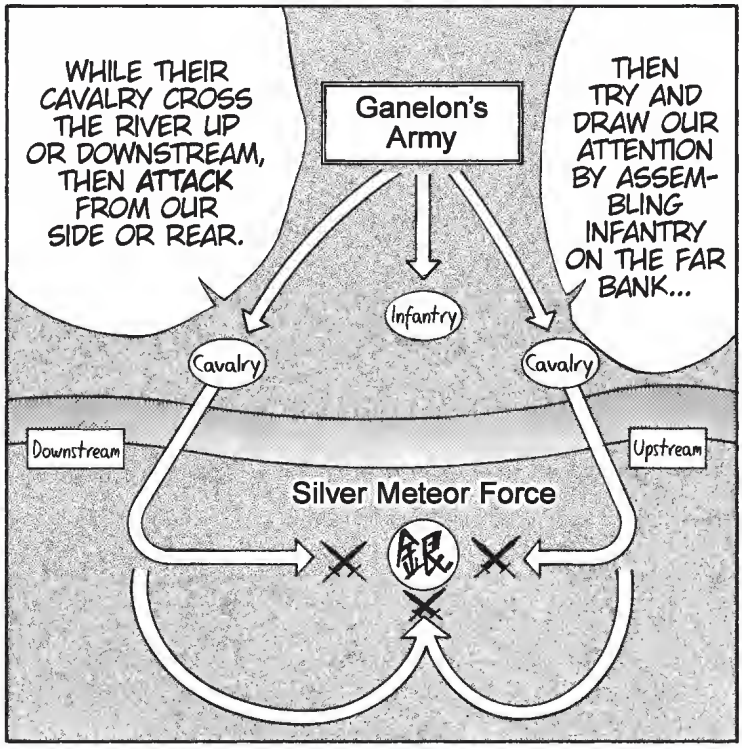
19 ◆ GANELON'S PLOT


THIS MAP SHOWS ORANGE PLAINS.
FLIPPL


GANELON'S ARMY
ORANGE PLAINS
—TERRITOIRE—
THE REPORT LOCATED THEM SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE... ACROSS THE RIVER. ABOUT A DAY AWAY, ON FOOT.
PLAINS
SILVER METEOR FORCE'S CAMP
木木

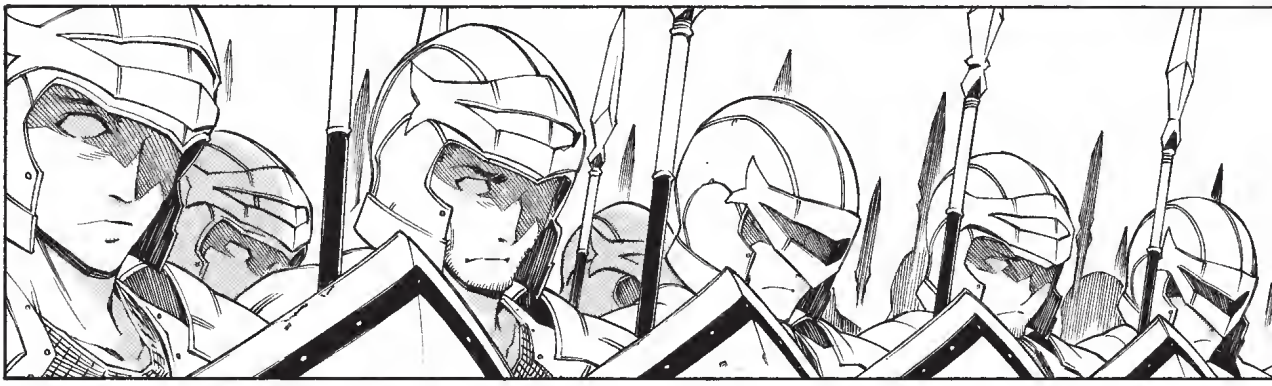

WE CAN MATCH THEIR TROOP NUM-BERS...
BUT WE NEED MEN TO MANAGE OUR FOOD AND WEAPONS. JUST A LITTLE OVER 5,500 ARE FREE TO FIGHT.
THEY NUMBERED NEAR SIX THOUSAND.
ABOUT A THOUSAND HORSEMEN. THE REST, FOOT SOLDIERS.

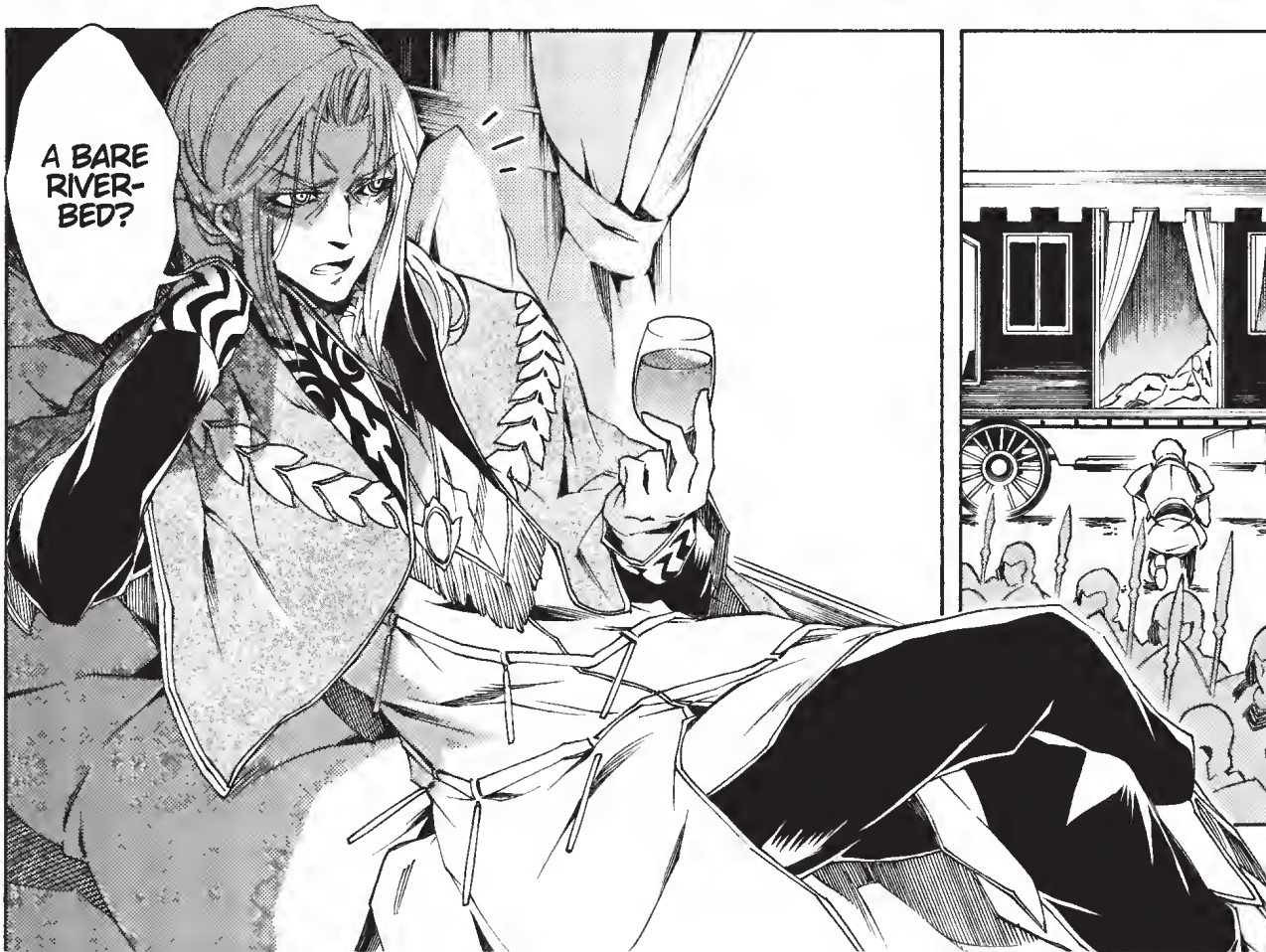
※30 alsins is about 100 feet.



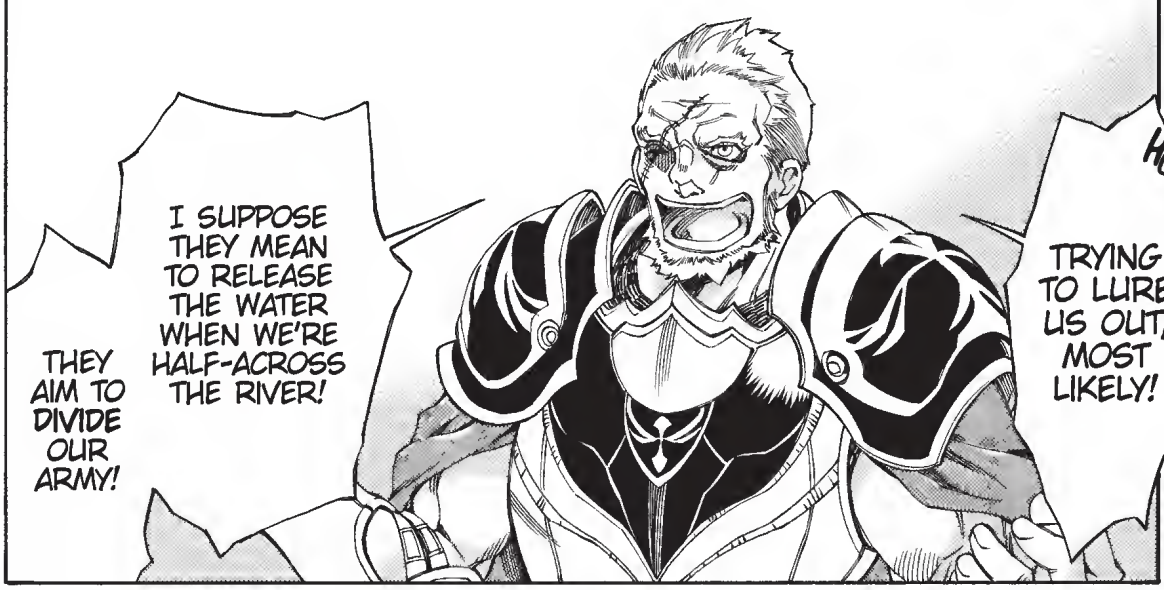
I SUPPOSE WE CAN'T MIMIC THEIR STRATEGY?
THAT'LL LIKELY BE THE INFANTRY'S CUE TO STRIKE.
WE CAN'T SACRIFICE TROOPS, GIVEN OUR NUMBERS.
TWOMP...
IN THAT CASE...
WHY NOT TRY THIS...?
POINT

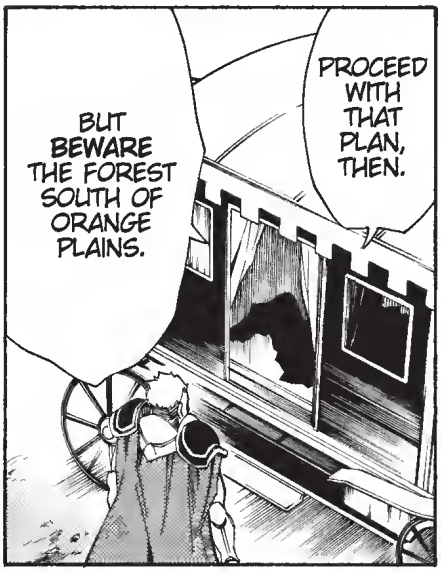
ZUAAAA
AAA
GANELON'S ARMY
5,000
HEAVY INFANTRY UNITS
FLAP
FLAP

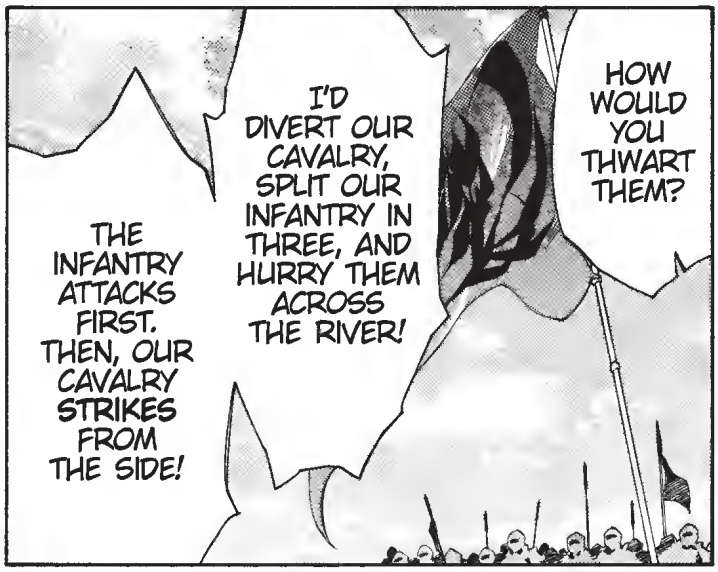


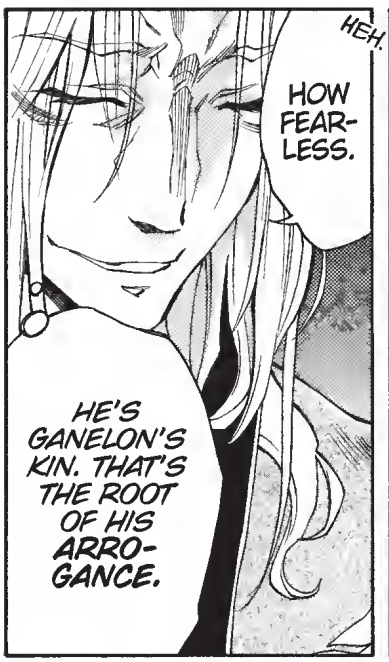

A BARE RIVER-BED?

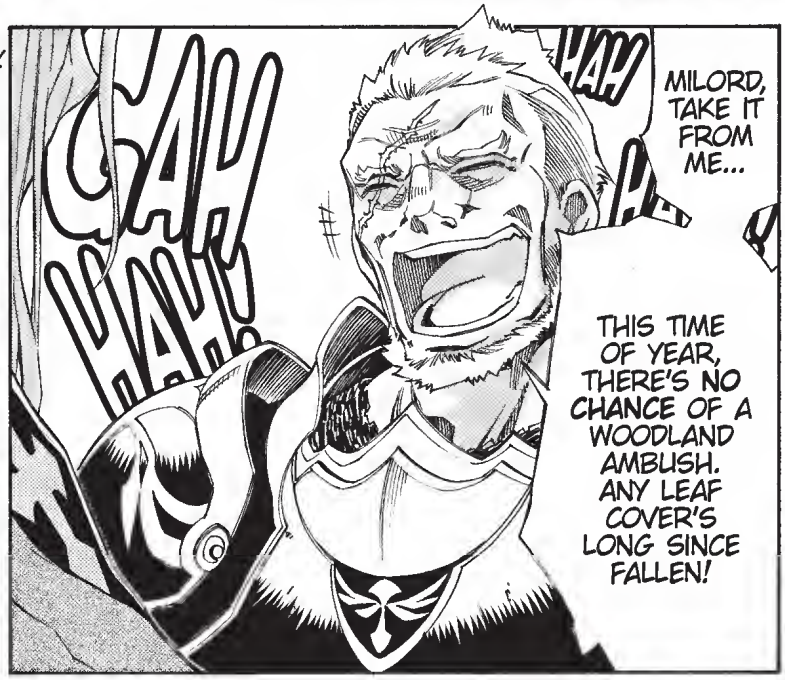
YES.
IT'S AS THOUGH IT'S RUN DRY.
ドキ
THEY MUST'VE BLOCKED ITS FLOW WITH SANDBAGS UPSTREAM.
THE ENEMY'S NO-WHERE NEAR THE BANK ...
THEY'RE NOT HINDERING OUR PASSAGE ACROSS.
HMM.
SUMMON THE GENERAL.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'RE UP TO?
HOW CAN I HELP, MILORD?
GA-
SHIZG


HUMPH!
TRYING TO LURE US OUT, MOST LIKELY!
I SUPPOSE THEY MEAN TO RELEASE THE WATER WHEN WE'RE HALF-ACROSS THE RIVER!
THEY AIM TO DIVIDE OUR ARMY!


PROCEED WITH THAT PLAN, THEN.
BUT BEWARE THE FOREST SOUTH OF ORANGE PLAINS.


HOW WOULD YOU THWART THEM?
I'D DIVERT OUR CAVALRY, SPLIT OUR INFANTRY IN THREE, AND HURRY THEM ACROSS THE RIVER!
THE INFANTRY ATTACKS FIRST. THEN, OUR CAVALRY STRIKES FROM THE SIDE!


HEH.
HOW FEAR-LESS.
HE'S GANELON'S KIN. THAT'S THE ROOT OF HIS ARRO-GANCE.

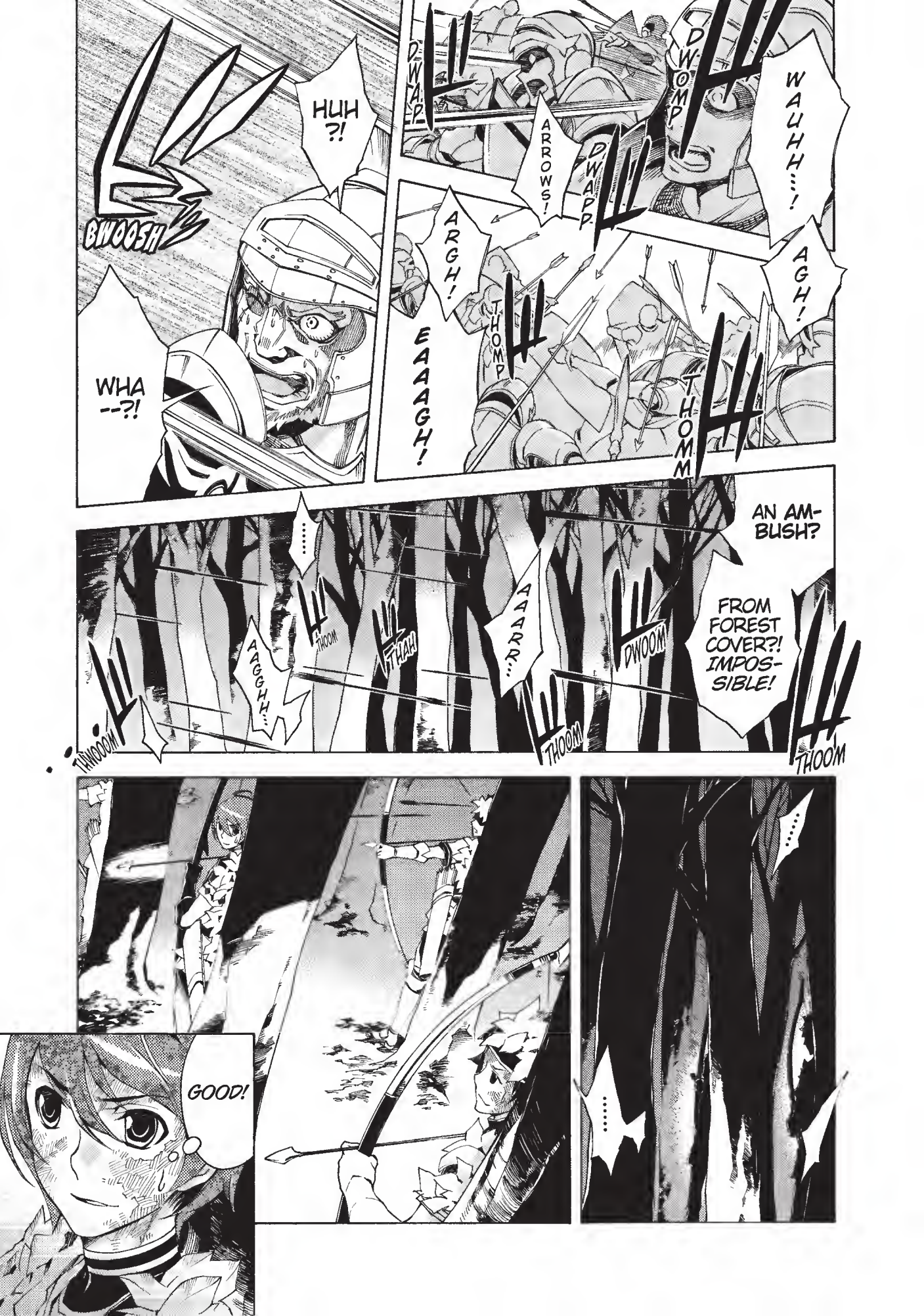

GAH HAH!
HA!
MILORD, TAKE IT FROM ME...
THIS TIME OF YEAR, THERE'S NO CHANCE OF A WOODLAND AMBUSH. ANY LEAF COVER'S LONG SINCE FALLEN!

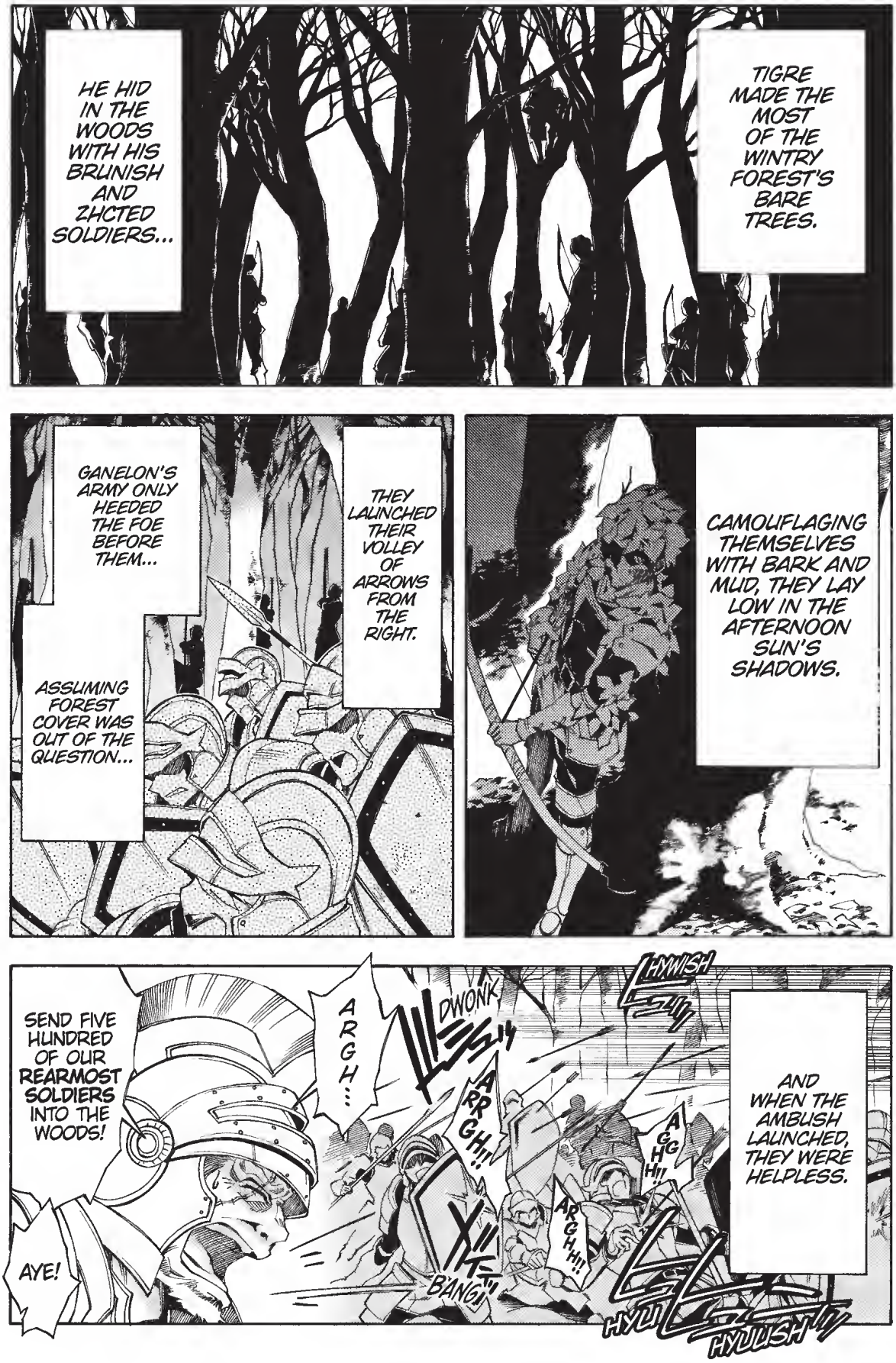
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
PLAASH
BLOSH
CAPTURE THAT WAR MAIDEN ALIVE, WON'T YOU?
ALL UNITS, AD-VANCE!
YAHH!!
YAAAH-
HRRR!!!
WEALTH, LIVESTOCK, PEOPLE...
IF YOU WANT TO PILLAGE, BRING US VICTORY!
ROUT THE ENEMY, AND YOU CAN SACK THE VILLAGES!
THE FOE'S PULLING FARTHER SOUTH!
HMM ?!
OUR INFANTRY'S CROSSED THE RIVER, SIR!
WHY WON'T THEY RESPOND PROP-ERLY ?!
RAAA-
AAGH!!
PLASHA
SPLASH
RAAA-
AAAR!!

I'VE A MESSAGE FROM MARQUIS GREAST!
"YOU HAVE THIS WELL IN HAND. I'M HEADING TO THE RIVERSIDE. ENJOY YOUR GLORIOUS VICTORY."
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.
MMPH...
THE ENEMY'S RETREAT SEEMS VERY SUSPECT...
SCARED OFF BY THE BATTLE?
IF THEY RELEASE THE TORRENT NOW, OUR OPTIONS ARE LIMITED. STOPPING HERE IS TOO HAZARDOUS!
SEND A HUNDRED MEN TO THE MARQUIS FOR PROTECTION!
AYE, SIR!
YAAAAAAHR!!
ALL UNITS, PRESS FORWARD! PURSUE THE FOE!
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP

WHAT A TROUBLE-SOME CREW!
HUHH!
HUHH!
THEY'RE STAYING JUST OUT OF REACH... SO NEAR, YET SO FAR!
AND WE'RE RIGHT ON THEIR TAIL. THAT'LL STRAIN THEM AS WELL!
TROMP TROMP TROMP
TROMP TROMP
STILL... MAINTAINING SUCH CLOSE PROXIMITY WILL TAX THEIR WITS!
WAAAA-
AARGH!!
ON-WARD! DRIVE THEM OUT FROM BEHIND!
YES!
GOT 'EM!!
TROMP
TROMP
TRMP

ATTA...!
HWISH
HWISH
HWISH
HWISH
HWISH
HWISH


WAUHH...!
DWOMP
AGH!
DWAP
ARROWS!
DWAPP
ARGH!
THOMP
EAAAAGH!
THOMM
HUH?!
BWOOSH
WHA--?!
AN AM-BUSH?
FROM FOREST COVER?! IMPOS-SIBLE!
.....
AAGGHH...
THOOM
THAH!
AAARR...
DWOOM
THOOM
THWOOM
THOOM
.....
.....
GOOD!

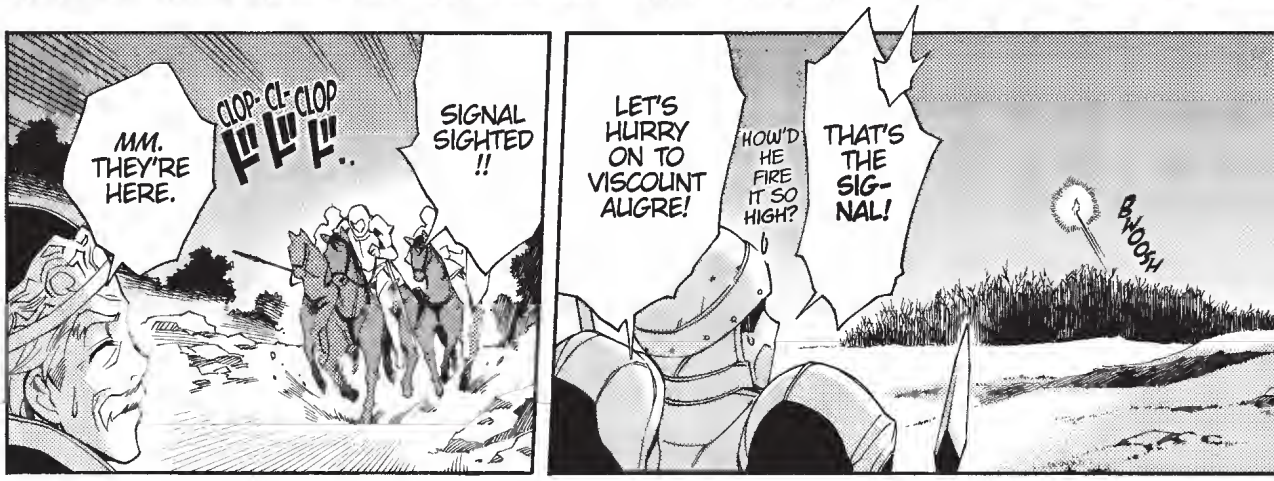

HE HID IN THE WOODS WITH HIS BRUNISH AND ZHCTED SOLDIERS...
TIGRE MADE THE MOST OF THE WINTRY FOREST'S BARE TREES.
GANELON'S ARMY ONLY HEEDED THE FOE BEFORE THEM...
ASSUMING FOREST COVER WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION...
THEY LAUNCHED THEIR VOLLEY OF ARROWS FROM THE RIGHT.
CAMOUFLAGING THEMSELVES WITH BARK AND MUD, THEY LAY LOW IN THE AFTERNOON SUN'S SHADOWS.
SEND FIVE HUNDRED OF OUR REARMOST SOLDIERS INTO THE WOODS!
AYE!
ARGH...
DWONK
ARRGH!!
BANG!
HYUUSH
AGHGHH!!
ARGHH!!!
HYUUSH
AND WHEN THE AMBUSH LAUNCHED, THEY WERE HELPLESS.

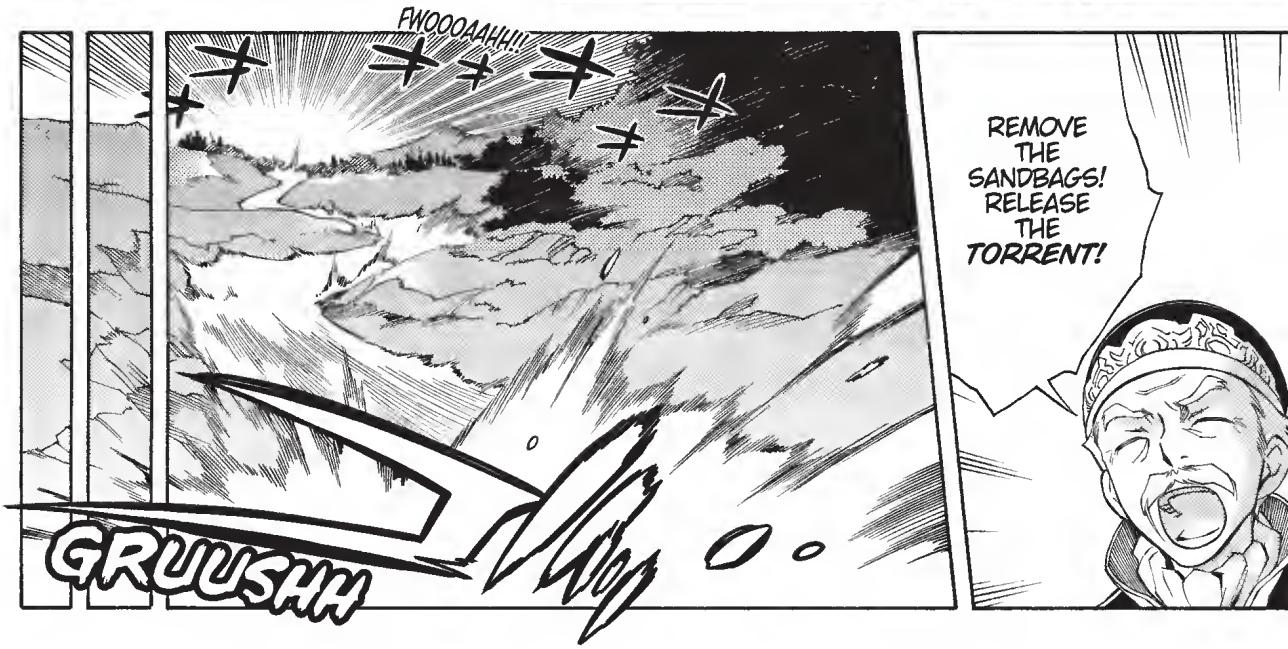
GLANCK
SHWANG
EAGH!!
GET THEM OUT OF THE ARCHERS' RANGE!
AS FOR OUR RIGHT FLANK...
CREAK
I...
I'LL ASSUME REAR COMMAND!
SWIVEL
WAAHH!!
Y-YES, SIR!
WE'RE SITTING DUCKS HERE...!
DRIB
DRRIBBL
WHERE THE HELL IS THE CAVALRY I CALLED?!
WAAAHHH...
!
THEY'RE RETREATING!

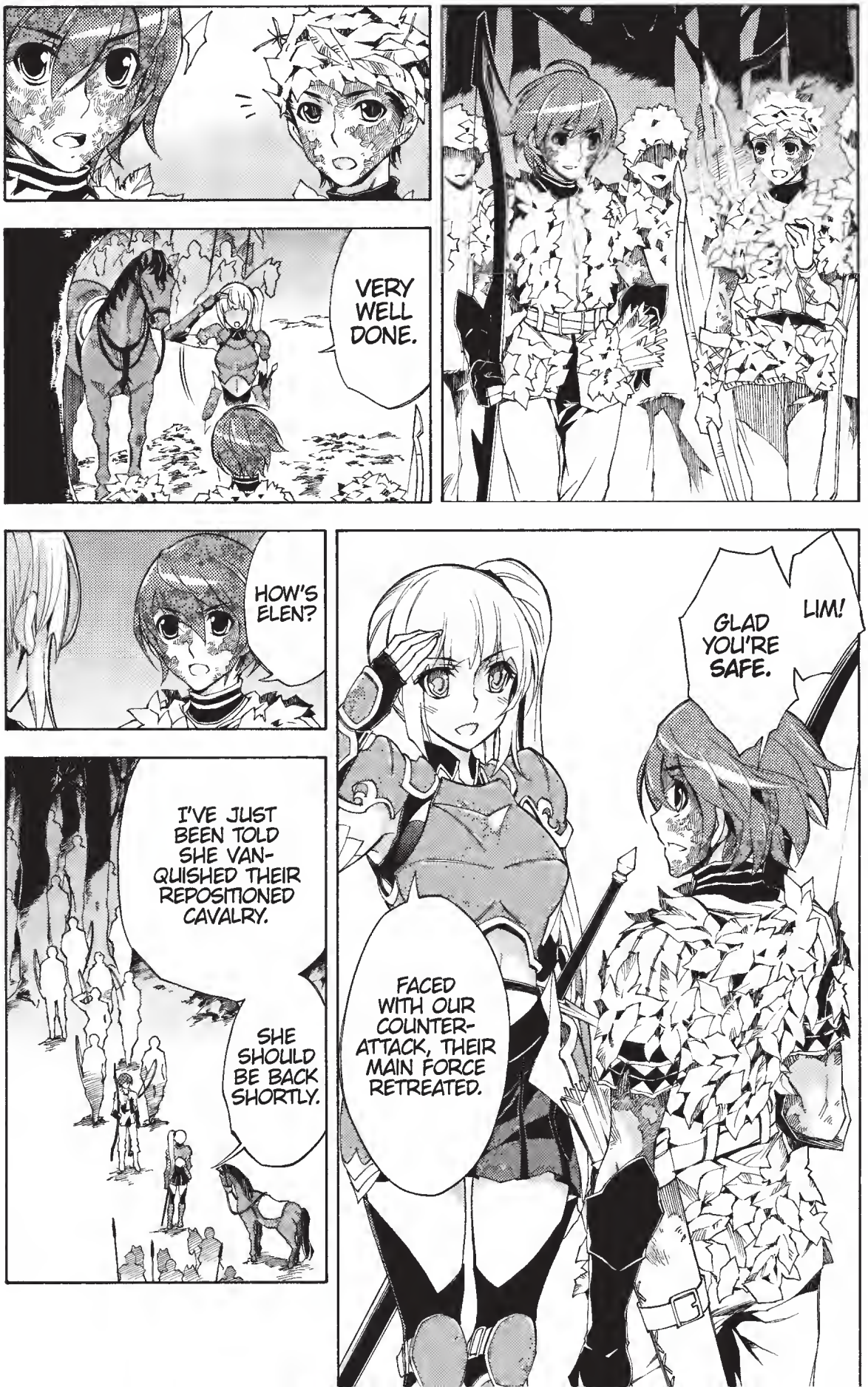
LET'S COUNTER-ATTACK!
FIRST AND SECOND CAVALRY, PURSUE THEIR RIGHT AND CENTER!
YAAA-
AAA-
THUD
THUD
AHH!!
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN ...?!
THIS BEG-GARS BELIEF!
KLING
ARGH!!
SLASH
TH-THUD
TH-THUD
PULL BACK, DAMN IT!
RE-TREAT !!
EEAAH!!

HAAH...
HAAH...
WHAT A COUP!
OUR PITFALLS AND ROPE TRAPS WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.
YOU BEAT THE ODDS BRILLIANTLY, MEN!
HAHH.
HAHH.
ALAS FOR OUR SLAIN FOES-- THEY WERE PERFECT TARGETS!

I'LL SEND UP THE FLARE NOW.
BWROOSH
SHUUUM
BWA-OOSH
OOH...


THAT'S THE SIG-NAL!
HOW'D HE FIRE IT SO HIGH?
LET'S HURRY ON TO VISCOUNT AUGRE!
B-WOOSH
SIGNAL SIGHTED !!
CLOP- CL- CLOP
MM. THEY'RE HERE.


REMOVE THE SANDBAGS! RELEASE THE TORRENT!
FWOOOAAH!!!
GRUUUSHH

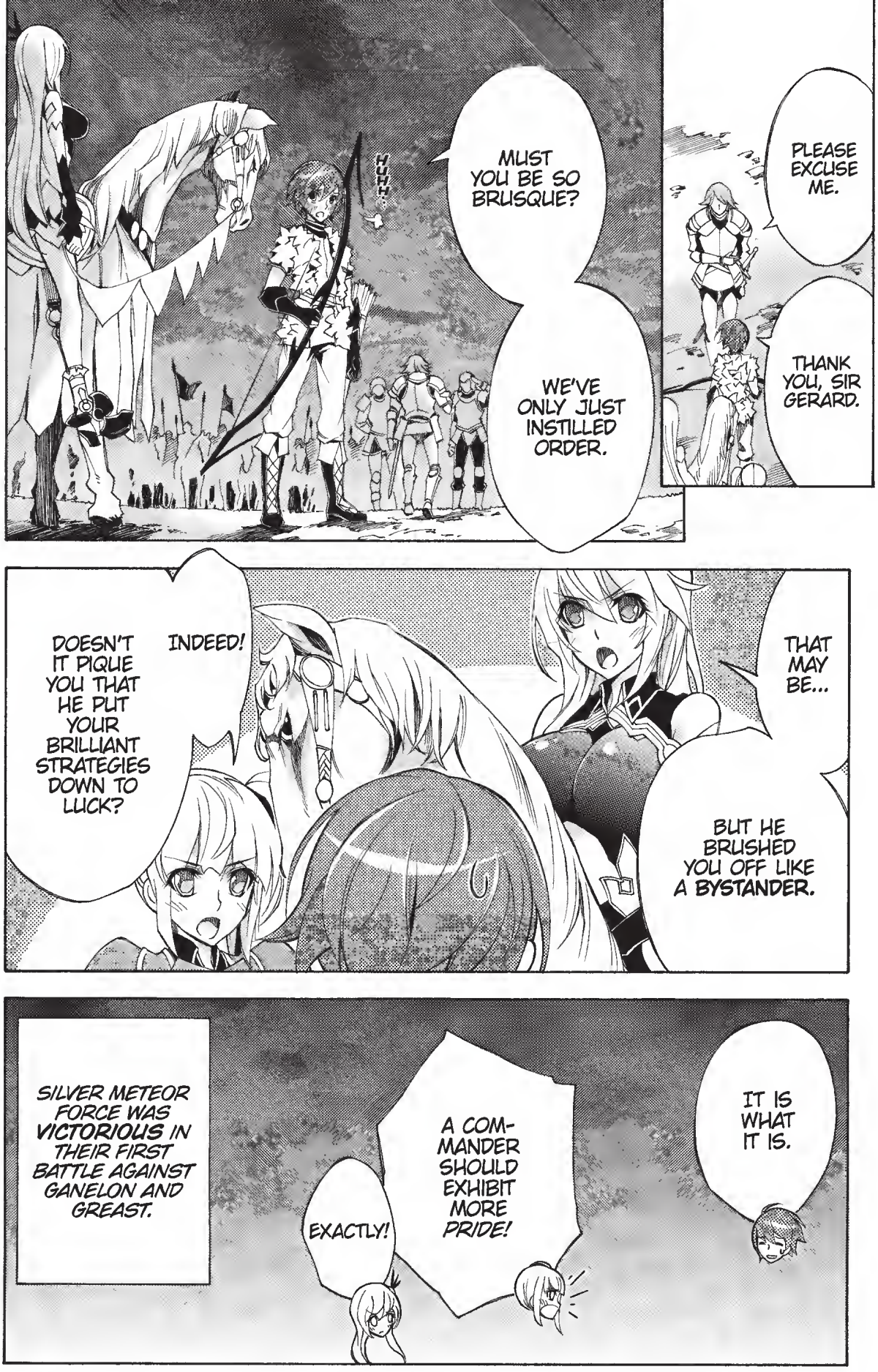

VERY WELL DONE.
HOW'S ELEN?
I'VE JUST BEEN TOLD SHE VANQUISHED THEIR REPOSITIONED CAVALRY.
SHE SHOULD BE BACK SHORTLY.
LIM!
GLAD YOU'RE SAFE.
FACED WITH OUR COUNTER-ATTACK, THEIR MAIN FORCE RETREATED.

I'M SURPRISED WE BESTED THEM SO EASILY.
I'D EXPECTED MORE PUSH-BACK...
YES.
MMM.
WE SHOULDN'T FACE THEM WITH THE RIVER AT OUR BACKS.
ONCE THEY CROSS THE WATER, THEY'LL LIKELY BE CAUTIOUS UNTIL WE RETREAT.
IF THEY CAN BE LURED ACROSS THE RIVERBED, WE CAN LIKELY GET THEM INTO THE WOODS.
FIRST, WE'LL TEMPT THEM OUT BY BLOCKING THE RIVER.
TIGRE'S STRATEGY, DEVISED ALONG WITH ELEN AND THE OTHERS, SUC-CEEDED ROUNDLY.
HAD THEY CLASHED HEAD TO HEAD, THE FIRST SIDE TO WEAKEN WOULD HAVE LOST.
ONCE TIGRE'S ARROW FROM THE WOODS FRIGHT-ENED THE GENERAL...
THEY'D WON THE DAY.

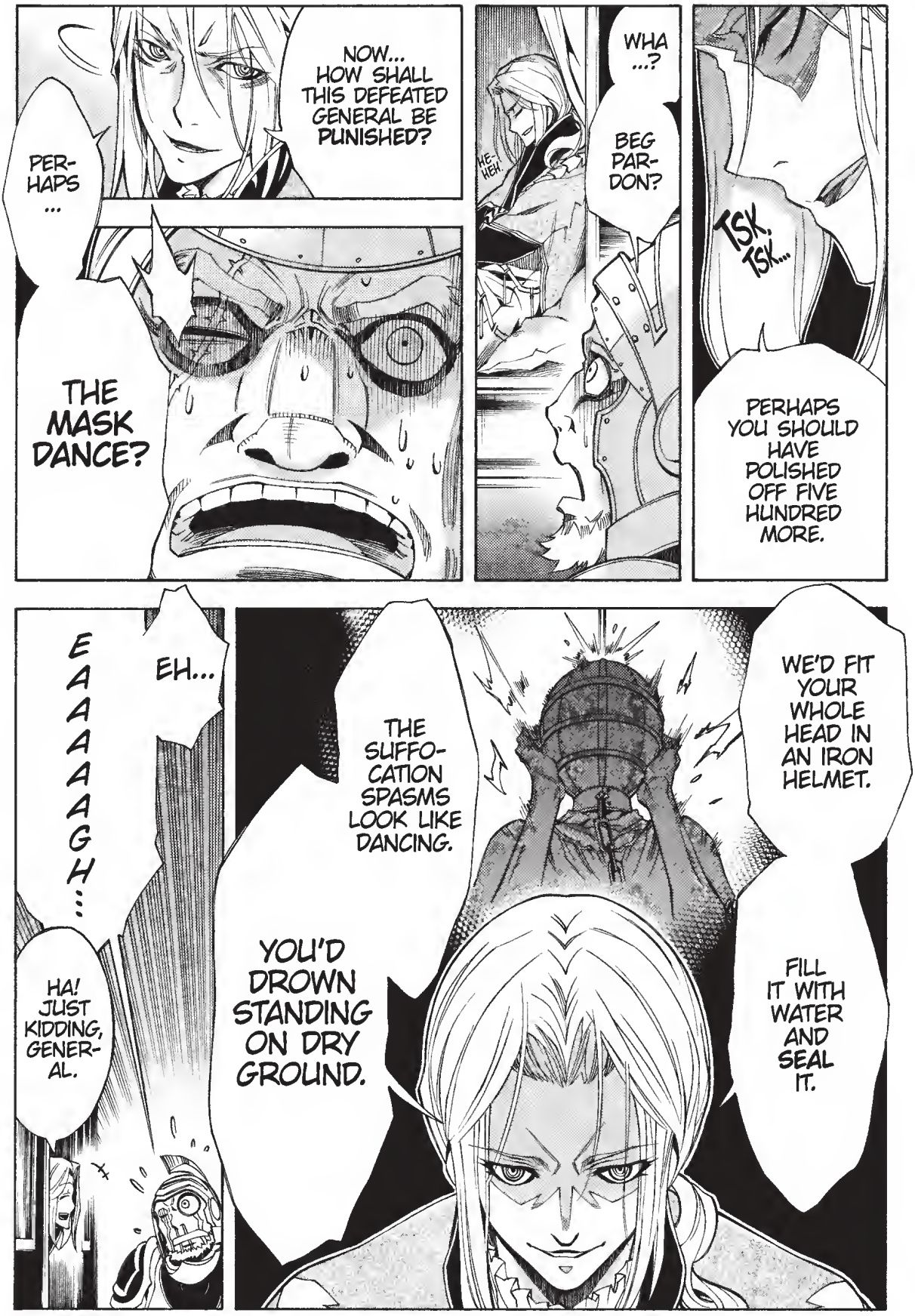
VICTORY!
LADY ELEO-NORA!
TAP
ELEN!
TWO DOZEN OR SO SOLDIERS INJURED. NOTHING FATAL.
WERE THERE CASUAL-TIES?
THE FOE'S ESCAPED NORTH-WARD.
AND THINGS WENT WELL HERE, YES?
THEY DID.

I'D BE GLAD IF THEY JUST WITHDREW THEIR TROOPS.
REMOVING THE REST OF SANDBAGS NOW WOULD TRAP THEM ON THIS SIDE OF THE RIVER UNTIL DAYBREAK.
CLOP
THERE YOU ARE!
WE SHOULD PITCH TONIGHT'S CAMP.
SO!
TOP-TIER, EAGLE-EYED MERCENARIES-- WITH HIGH MORALE, DESPITE ENDEAVORS ON FOREIGN SOIL.
ZHCTED'S ARMY IS AS MIGHTY AS RUMOR CLAIMS. I'M IMPRESSED!
GERARD, VISCOUNT AUGRE'S SON.

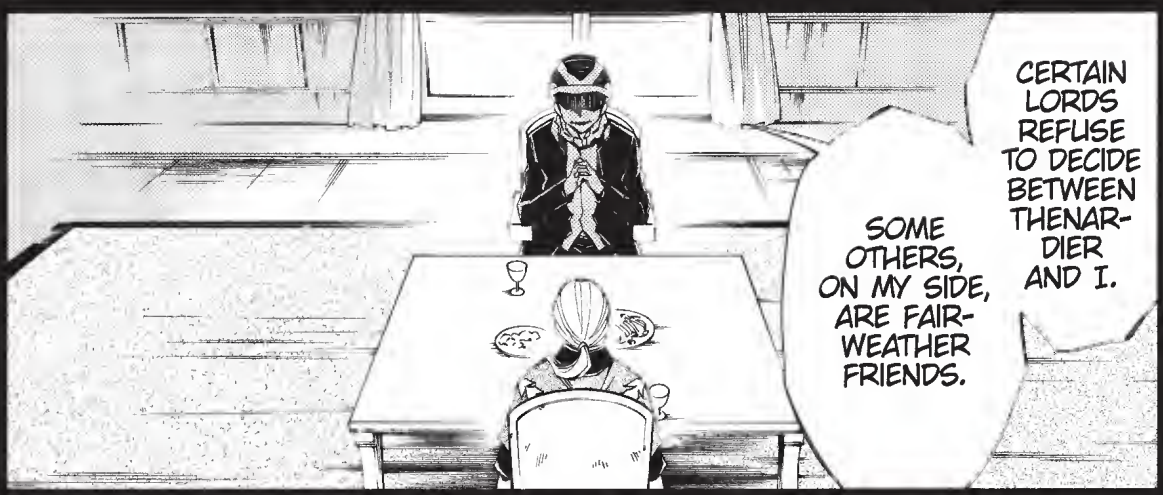
YOU'VE SOME STAUNCH ALLIES, COUNT VORN.
I ENVY YOUR FORTUNE IN FINDING THEM.
OH... THANKS.
.....
SIR GERARD.
YOUR FLATTERY'S MOST GRACIOUS...
BUT LEADING YOUR ENEMY BY THE NOSE IS TRICKIER THAN CATCHING THEM OFF GUARD.
YOU LIKELY MEAN WELL, BUT YOUR COMMENTS COULD BE MISREAD.
CHOOSE YOUR WORDS MORE CAREFULLY.
A-ALL RIGHT.


PLEASE EXCUSE ME.
THANK YOU, SIR GERARD.
HUHH.
MUST YOU BE SO BRUSQUE?
WE'VE ONLY JUST INSTILLED ORDER.
THAT MAY BE...
BUT HE BRUSHED YOU OFF LIKE A BYSTANDER.
INDEED!
DOESN'T IT PIQUE YOU THAT HE PUT YOUR BRILLIANT STRATEGIES DOWN TO LUCK?
IT IS WHAT IT IS.
A COM-MANDER SHOULD EXHIBIT MORE PRIDE!
EXACTLY!
SILVER METEOR FORCE WAS VICTORIOUS IN THEIR FIRST BATTLE AGAINST GANELON AND GREAST.

YOU WERE NEARLY OBLITERATED.
FEWER THAN FOUR THOUSAND MEN RETURNED.
YOU LOST NEARLY HALF OUR FORCES!
Y-YES, SIR.


NOW... HOW SHALL THIS DEFEATED GENERAL BE PUNISHED?
PER-HAPS ...
THE MASK DANCE?
HE-HEH.
WHA ...?
BEG PAR-DON?
TSK, TSK...
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE POLISHED OFF FIVE HUNDRED MORE.
WE'D FIT YOUR WHOLE HEAD IN AN IRON HELMET.
FILL IT WITH WATER AND SEAL IT.
THE SUFFO-CATION SPASMS LOOK LIKE DANCING.
YOU'D DROWN STANDING ON DRY GROUND.
EH...
EAAAAAAGH...
HA! JUST KIDDING, GENER-AL.

WAIT 'TIL MORNING, THEN CROSS THE RIVER.
WE'RE PULLING OUT.
BUT COULDN'T THEY STRIKE TONIGHT?
THEY WOULDN'T HAVE RELEASED THE WATER IF THAT WERE THE CASE.
THEY CLEARLY PLANNED TO CHASE US OFF.
WILL THIS YIELD THE RESULTS DUKE GANELON HOPED FOR?
TEN DAYS AGO...
I'VE A BEE IN MY BONNET.


CERTAIN LORDS REFUSE TO DECIDE BETWEEN THENARDIER AND I.
SOME OTHERS, ON MY SIDE, ARE FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.

I TAKE IT YOU'D PREFER THEY WERE ENEMIES YOU COULD SLAUGHTER?

GENERALLY SPEAKING...
THE FEWER PARTIES DIVIDING PLUNDER, THE BETTER.
FEWER ALLIES WOULD SUIT ME...
MARQUIS.

WHICH LEADS US TO COUNT VORN?
CLATTER...
CORRECT.
YOU MUST LOSE THIS BATTLE.
SHOULD OUR VICTORY BECOME WIDELY KNOWN, THE PUBLIC MIGHT BETRAY ME BY BACKING VORN.
HO HO...
SUPPOSE WE DEMAND FEALTY, AND COUNT VORN AGREES?
THEN WE'LL PILLAGE THE WHOLE OF ALSACE.
HAVE VORN HELM A BATTLE...
LAYING HIS ARMY TO WASTE.
TWITCH...
THIS COLDBLOODED MISANTHROPE MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL.

CHAPTER 19: END

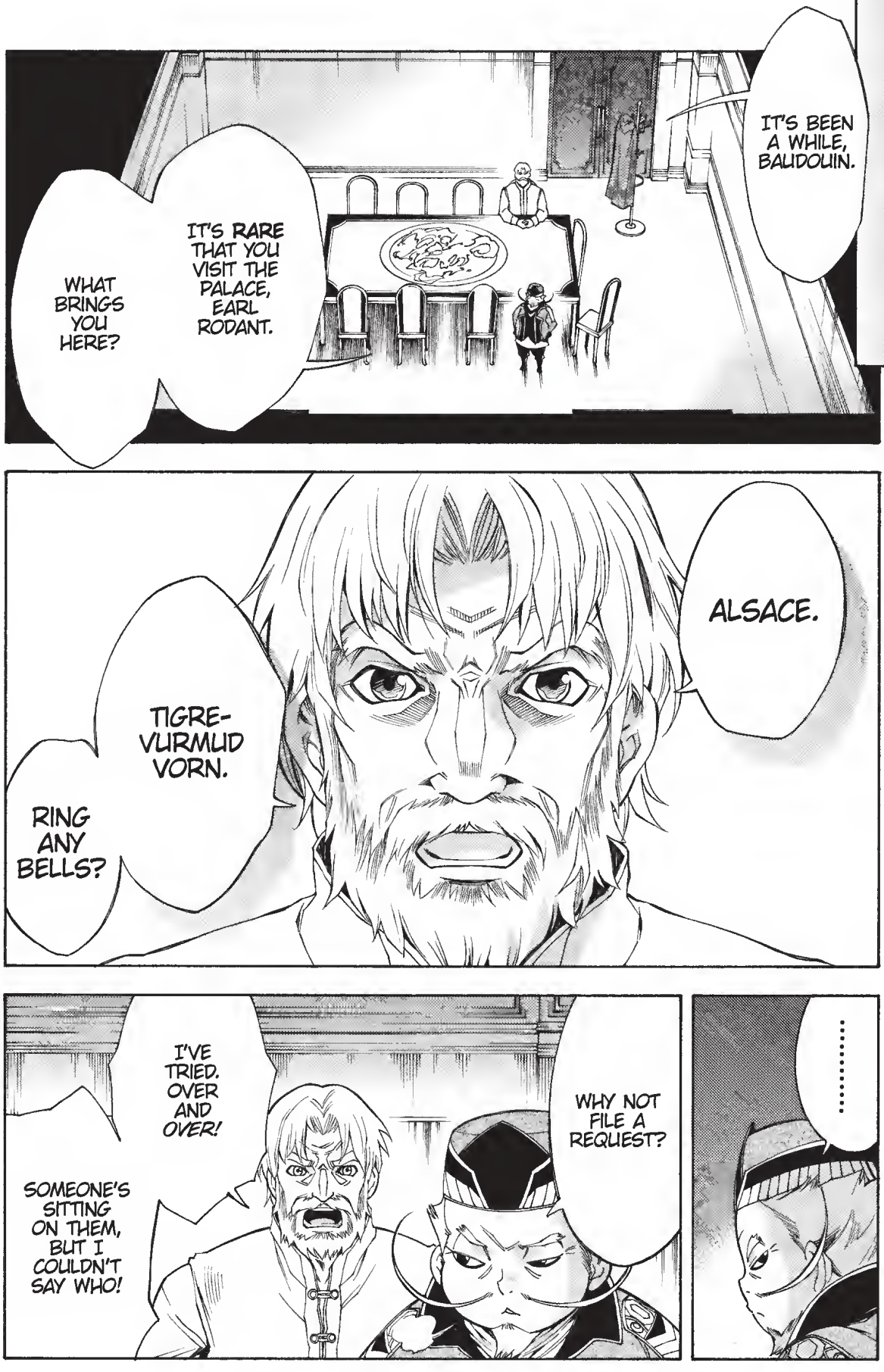
20
THE KING'S SECRET

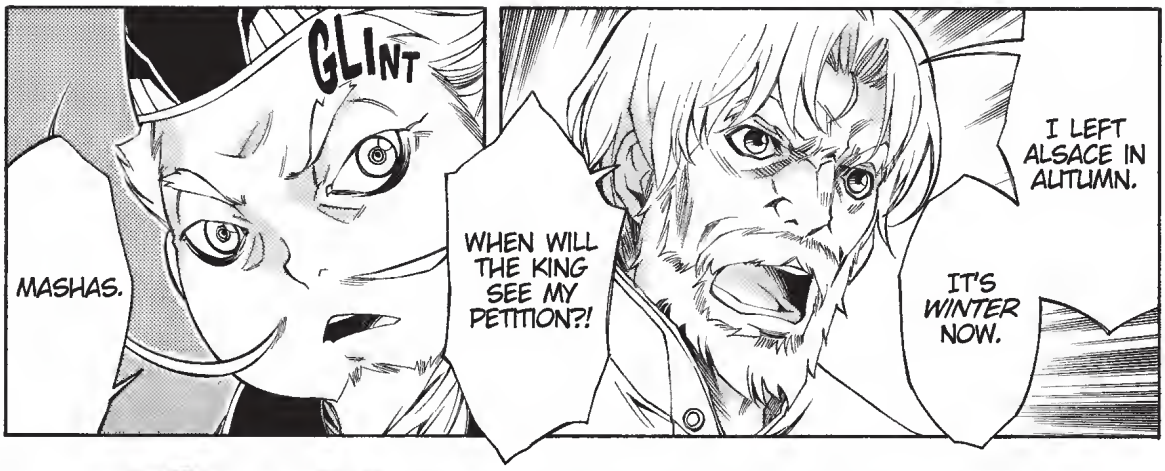
MASHAS VISITED BRUNE'S CAPITAL, NICE.
WHILE SILVER METEOR FORCE BATTLED GANELON'S ARMY UNDER MARQUIS GREAST'S COMMAND...
INDEED.
GO AHEAD.
I'M MASHAS RODANT. HIS MAJESTY NAMED ME EARL OF AUDE.
CARRY ON.
MAY I RETAIN YOUR WEAPON, SIR?
YES.
PHEW.
NOW THE SECOND GATE...
KSH
KSH
KSH
KSH

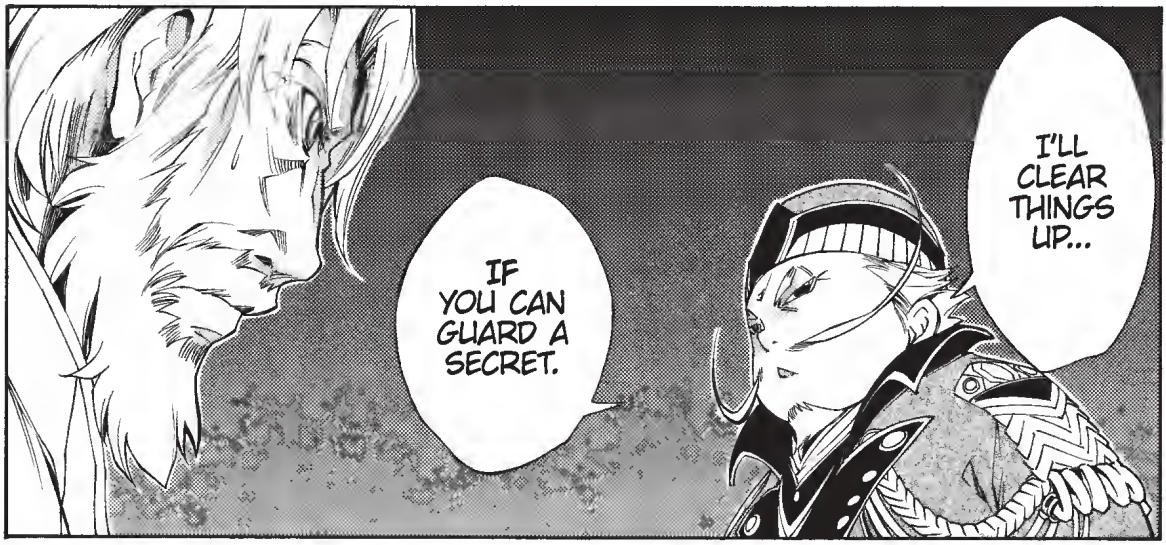
AFTER A MONTH IN NICE...
MASHAS STILL HADN'T SECURED A ROYAL AUDIENCE.
NOW FOR THE HARD PART...
IS THAT YOU, MASHAS? IT'S BEEN AGES!
I WAS IN TOWN, SO I STOPPED BY. DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?
HIS MAJESTY HASN'T LEFT HIS BED SINCE PRINCE REGNAS FELL IN BATTLE AT DINANT PLAINS.
STILL GRIEVING, CLEARLY.
THE DUKES THENARDIER AND GANELON NOW GRIP THE PALACE'S REINS.
THEY'VE HELD NO AUDIENCES FOR DAYS.
I'D SAY IT'S BEST, IF POSSIBLE, TO SEND ONE OF THE DUKES A PETITION... ACCOMPANIED BY BRIBE.
IMPOS-SIBLE... THEY'RE BOTH FOES!

I AM MASHAS RODANT.
I'M HERE TODAY TO SPEAK TO PRIME MINISTER BAUDOUIN.
I CAN'T GET A ROYAL AUDIENCE, OR REACH THE KING BY LETTER.
I NEED TO PLEAD MY CASE TO HIM PERSONALLY.
FORGIVE THE WAIT, EARL RODANT.
YOU MAY PROCEED.
GOOD.
IT SHOULDN'T SEEM TOO FISHY.
SOMEONE WHO KNEW THE PALACE WELL SUGGESTED THAT EXCUSE...
A MOMENT, PLEASE.
CLASP
SOMEHOW, I MUST GET TIGRE'S LETTER TO THE KING.
I MAY HAVE TO BEG THEIR HELP...
THE KING'S MAIDS AND RETAINERS ARE THE SOLE EXCEP-TIONS.
KSH
KSH
SHFF
.....
NOT EVEN SENIOR VASSALS ARE PERMITTED HERE WITHOUT KINGLY PERMISSION.

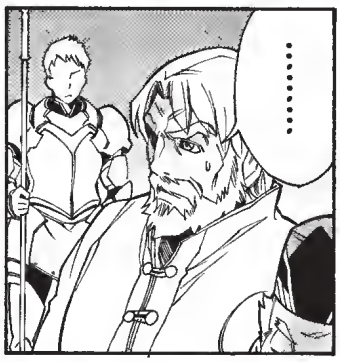
BAUDOUIN
BRUNE'S PRIME MINISTER
YOU'VE COME TO SEE ME...
EARL RODANT?
HE CAN'T HAVE SEEN THROUGH ME ALREADY.
BAUDOUIN ...
IT'S TOO CROWDED HERE. LET'S SPEAK ELSEWHERE.


IT'S BEEN A WHILE, BALDOUIN.
IT'S RARE THAT YOU VISIT THE PALACE, EARL RODANT.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
ALSACE.
TIGRE-VURMUD VORN.
RING ANY BELLS?
WHY NOT FILE A REQUEST?
I'VE TRIED. OVER AND OVER!
SOMEONE'S SITTING ON THEM, BUT I COULDN'T SAY WHO!
.....


GLINT
MASHAS.
WHEN WILL THE KING SEE MY PETITION?!
I LEFT ALSACE IN AUTUMN.
IT'S WINTER NOW.


IF YOU CAN GUARD A SECRET.
I'LL CLEAR THINGS UP...

CLAKK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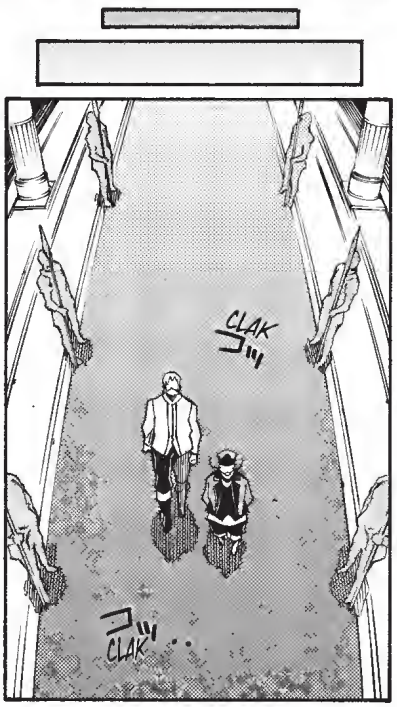
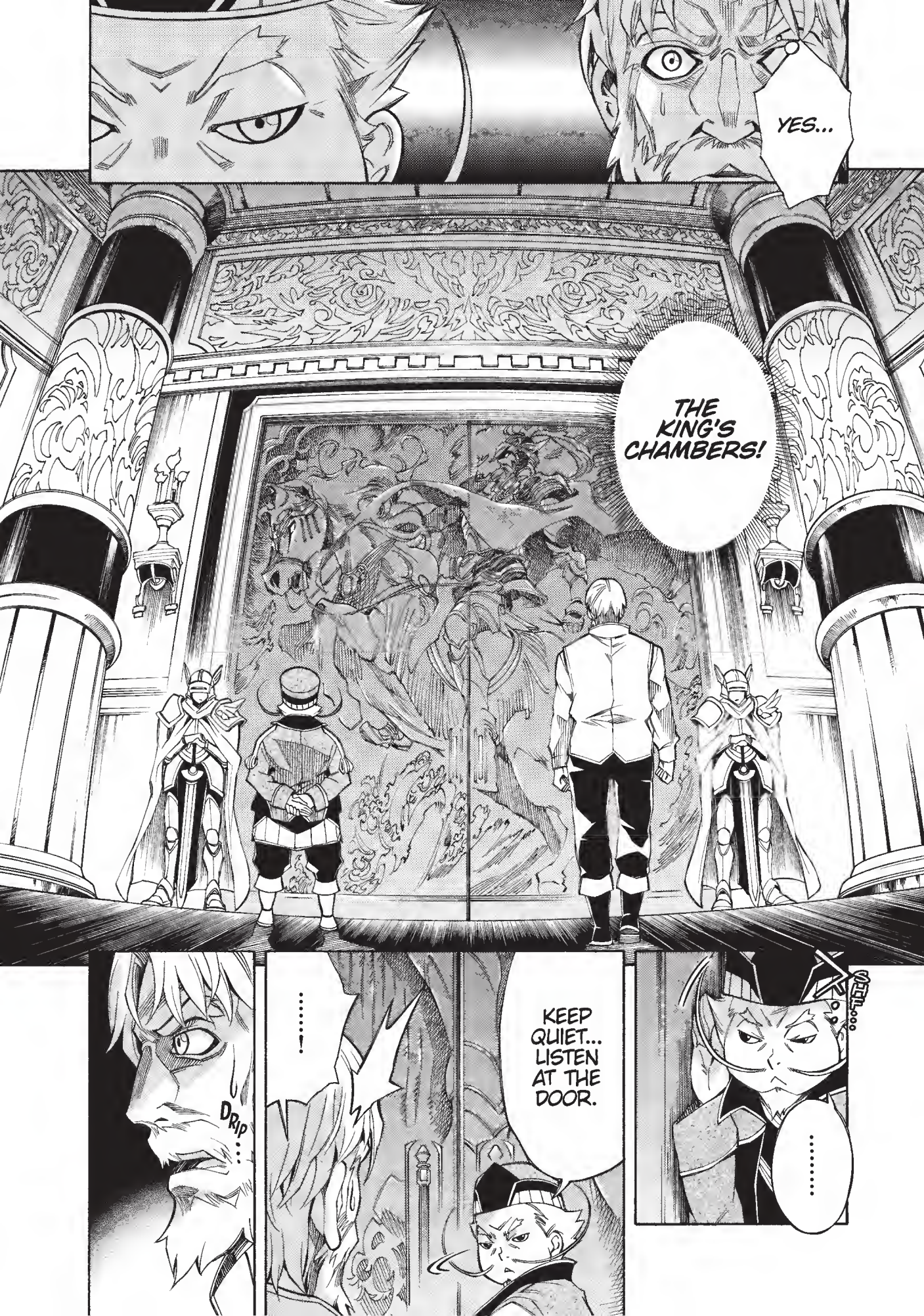
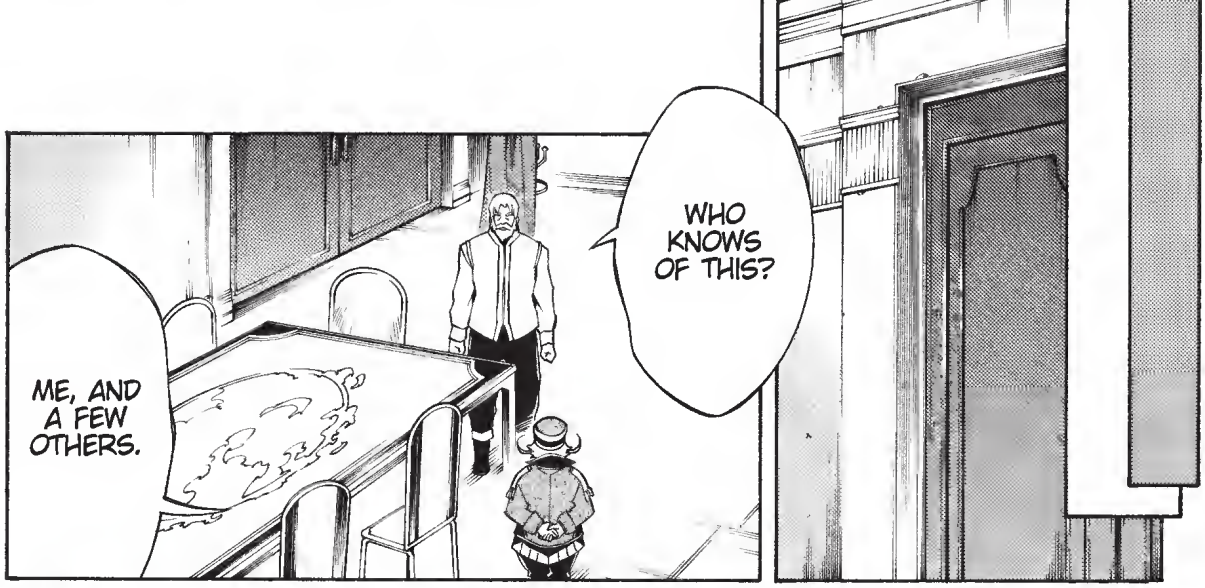
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THIS IS...

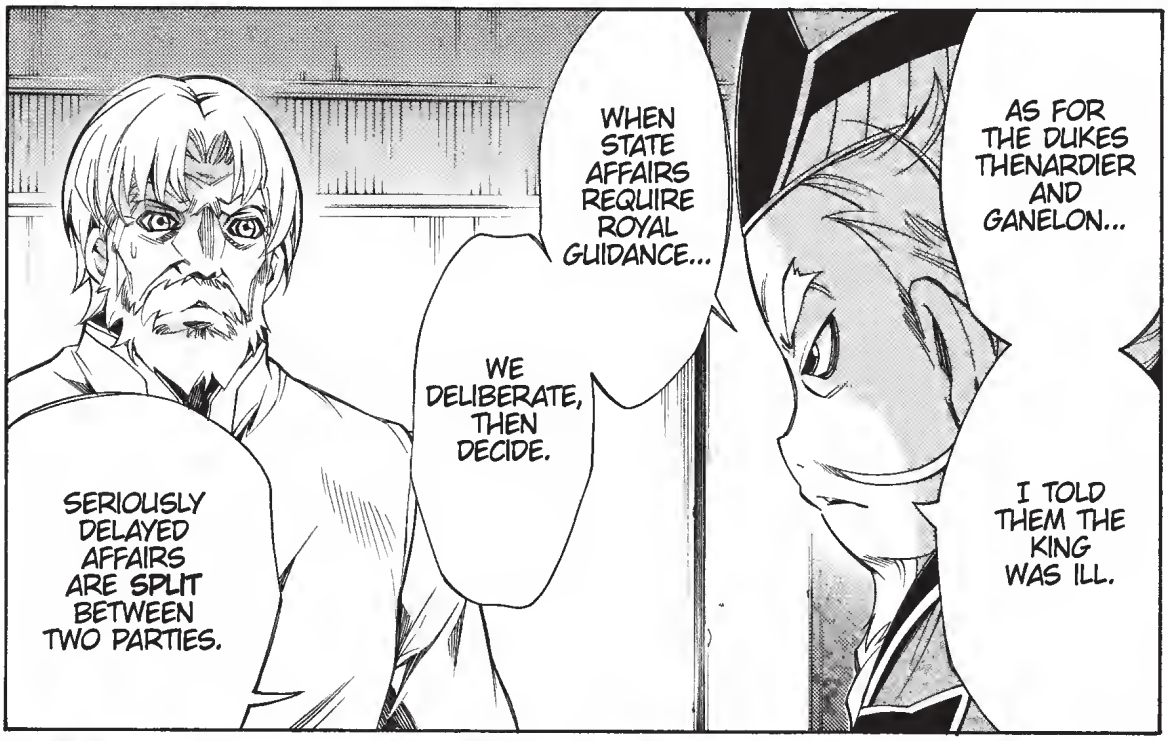

CLAK
CLAK

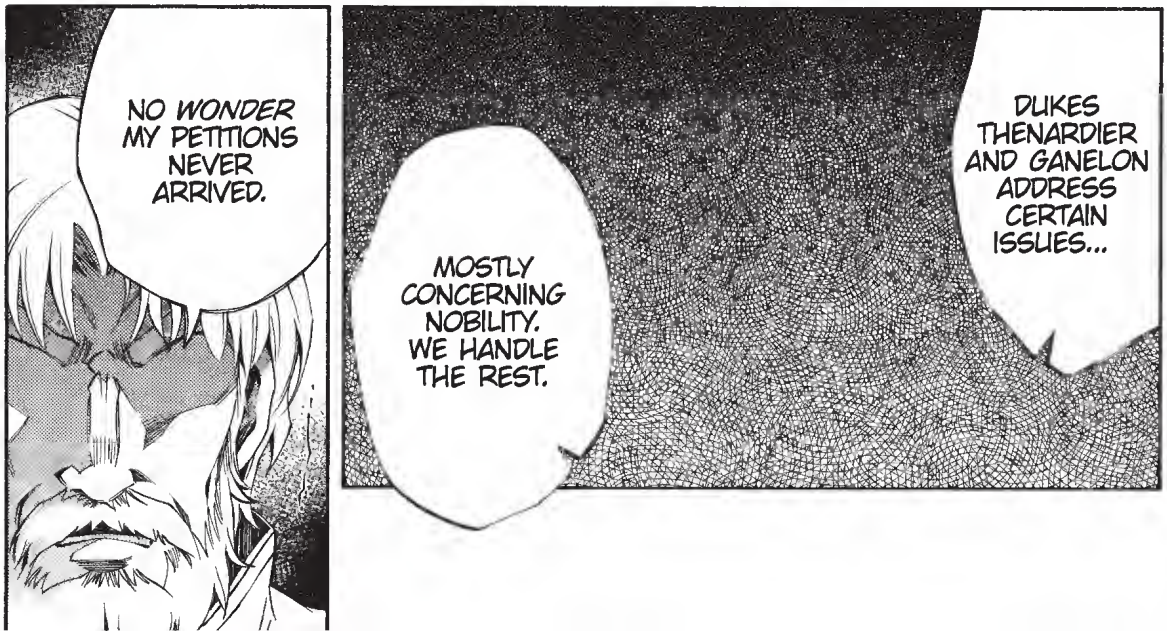

YES...
THE KING'S CHAMBERS!
.....
HUH...?
KEEP QUIET... LISTEN AT THE DOOR.
.....!
DRIP...

KLONK
GONGK
IS THAT THE KING'S VOICE?
KA-TINK
WHAT'S THIS?
RAD...
GULP...
WHAT'S HE...
DOING?
KATAANGK
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE, TOO.
IT SOUNDS LIKE... ROCK ON ROCK, OR WOOD ON WOOD.
KA-THONK
TA-KLIINK

KA-THUNK
PLAYING WITH TOY BLOCKS.
KALONK
.....!


WHO KNOWS OF THIS?
ME, AND A FEW OTHERS.


AS FOR THE DUKES THENARDIER AND GANELON...
I TOLD THEM THE KING WAS ILL.
WHEN STATE AFFAIRS REQUIRE ROYAL GUIDANCE...
WE DELIBERATE, THEN DECIDE.
SERIOUSLY DELAYED AFFAIRS ARE SPLIT BETWEEN TWO PARTIES.


DUKES THENARDIER AND GANELON ADDRESS CERTAIN ISSUES...
MOSTLY CONCERNING NOBILITY. WE HANDLE THE REST.
NO *WONDER* MY PETITIONS NEVER ARRIVED.

YOU'RE ...
WAITING FOR THENARDIER AND GANELON'S CLASH, I TAKE IT?
PERHAPS AVOIDING ISSUES TO DO WITH NOBILITY UNTIL ONE COLLAPSES?
WE HAVE NO ARMY OF OUR OWN...
NO MEANS TO FIGHT.
SO YOU'LL OVERLOOK THEIR RAMPANT TYRANNY.
TIGRE ...
TIGREVURMUD VORN HIRED ZHCTED SOLDIERS TO DEFEND HIS LANDS.
WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THAT?
WHAT ELSE, BUT TREASON?
.....

HE WAS CAPTURED IN THE FRAY AT DINANT PLAINS...
AND YOU NEVER EVEN *TRIED* TO HELP HIM.
WHEN THENARDIER'S MEN INVADED ALSACE...
NOT *ONE* KNIGHT SHOWED UP.
YOU TOSSED ASIDE A NOBLEMAN LOYAL TO THE KING...
AND ABANDONED YOUR ALSATIAN SUBJECTS!
CREEAK
YOU'VE COMMITTED TREASON AGAINST BRUNE AND ITS KING!!
DWAMM

MASHAS.
.....
I STAND BY MY WORDS.
WHATEVER ITS CAUSE, COUNT VORN'S TREASON IS A COURT MATTER.
PLENTY OF PEOPLE...
GO UNPUNISHED, DESPITE ALLOWING FOREIGN FORCES INTO BRUNE.
THAT SAID...
JUST BETWEEN US...

EXTEN-
UATING
CIRCUM-
STANCES
...
PERMIT
THEM TO
RECEIVE
A ROYAL
PARDON.
DUKE
GANELON'S
SON IN-LAW
IS HIS
NEPHEW...
DUKE
THENARDIER'S
WIFE, FOR
INSTANCE,
IS THE
KING'S
NIECE...
BOTH
DUKES
ENJOYED
A PARDON.
DO
YOU
...
MEAN
CLEMENCY
FOR
TIGRE'S
ACTIONS
...
WOULD
REQUIRE
ROYAL
INTERVENTION
ON HIS
BEHALF?

TAKE MY WORDS AS YOU WISH.
BUT I HOPE YOU'LL PAY HEED: BRUNE'S SURVIVAL IS MY HIGHEST PRIORITY.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
EARL.
PANHAM
HE'S GOT NO RECOURSE.
YOUR BLADE, SIR.
THANK YOU.
BUT HE HAS NO ROYAL ALLY UP HIS SLEEVE.
"JUSTICE WITHOUT FORCE IS TOOTHLESS," THEY SAY. AND TIGRE NEEDS THE FORCE OF THE CROWN ITSELF.
BUT AT LEAST NOW I KNOW WHERE WE STAND.
PHEW...
I COULDN'T HELP HIM, IN THE END.

AT ANY RATE, WE MUST DEFEAT THENARDIER.
THAT'S OUR AIM NOW.
WELL ...
NO TIME TO WASTE.
TROMP TROMP TROMP
ASSAS-SINS?!

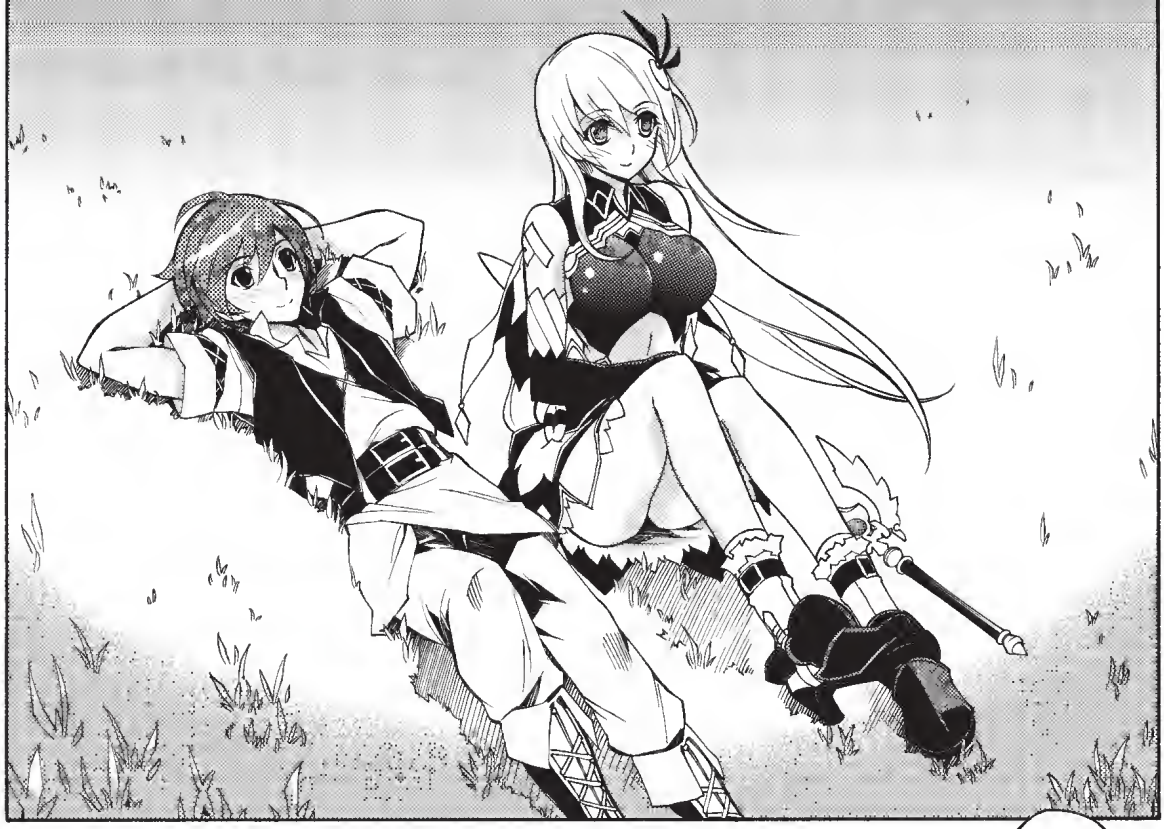
DAMMIT. THEY'RE HERDING ME DEEPER INSIDE.
TMP TMP TMP TMP
SWISH
SWISH
SWISH
THANKS TO THEN-ARDIER... OR GANELON ...?
THMMP
BWOSH
CHA-CHIK
!! DRIP.
BWOO
!
OOSH

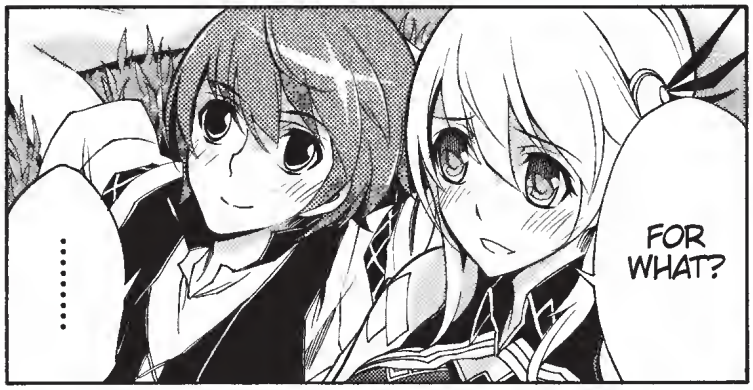
BWA
KUH-
KLNK
SLIDE
GAP
KLUNG
I'M OUTNUM-BERED.
CAN'T FIGHT BACK!
SHA-RAAAN
BWWISH
A WOMAN ?!
MISS, NO! RUN!
BA-
BWISH

OH MY!
SHRIN
GWOMP
GA-KLINK
FLIP
NNG
.....

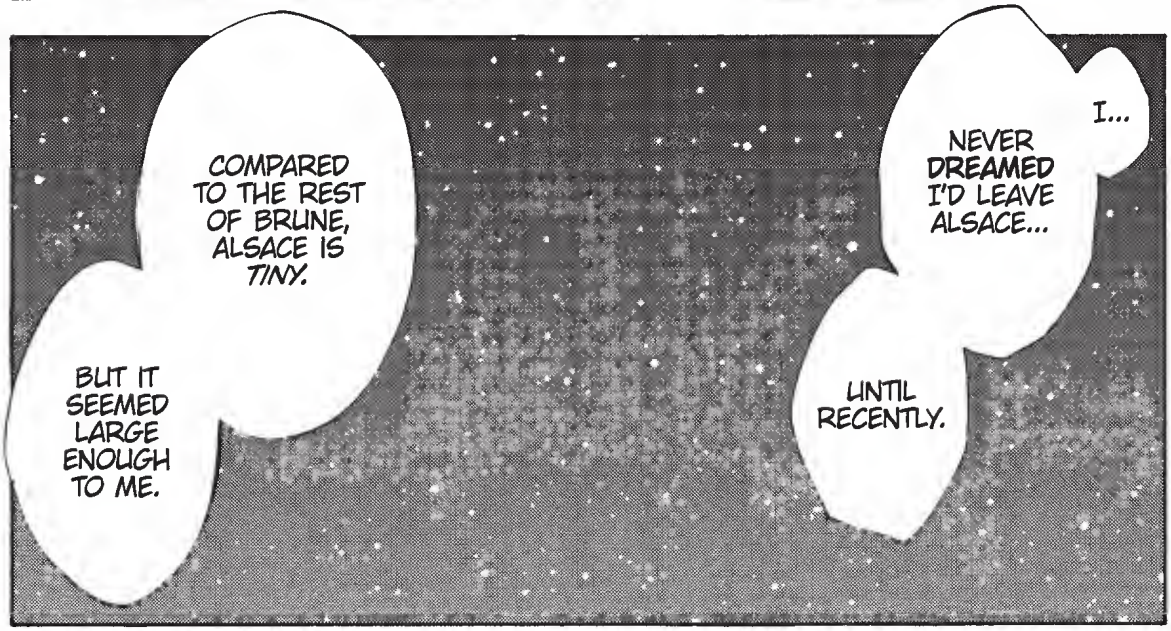
NIGHT-TIME AT SILVER METEOR FORCE'S CAMP...
FOL-LOWING VICTORY OVER GANELON.
BLAH
BLAH
BLATHER
BLATHER
WHEW...
I THINK I HAD ONE TOO MANY.

WINNING ONE BATTLE IS NO EXCUSE TO CAROUSE.
I'VE MADE BOTH DUKES, THENARDIER AND GANELON, MY ENEMIES.
HOW MANY FOES IS THAT NOW?
AND WHO ARE MY ALLIES?
TWOMP
FWAAAA
DID I WAKE YOU?
NO, DON'T WORRY.




.....
FOR WHAT?

THANKS, ELEN.


I...
NEVER DREAMED I'D LEAVE ALSACE...
UNTIL RECENTLY.
COMPARED TO THE REST OF BRUNE, ALSACE IS TINY.
BUT IT SEEMED LARGE ENOUGH TO ME.

I'M STILL IGNORANT ABOUT MANY THINGS.
IT'S A VERY NOVEL WORLD-VIEW.
BUT I'M GRATEFUL YOU'VE HELPED EXPAND MY HORIZONS.
I'VE GOT TO THINK OF BRUNE AS A WHOLE.
AND YET, I CAN'T JUST FOCUS ON ALSACE NOW.
NOT TO MENTION ZHCTED.
.....
SO THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT.
BRUSH

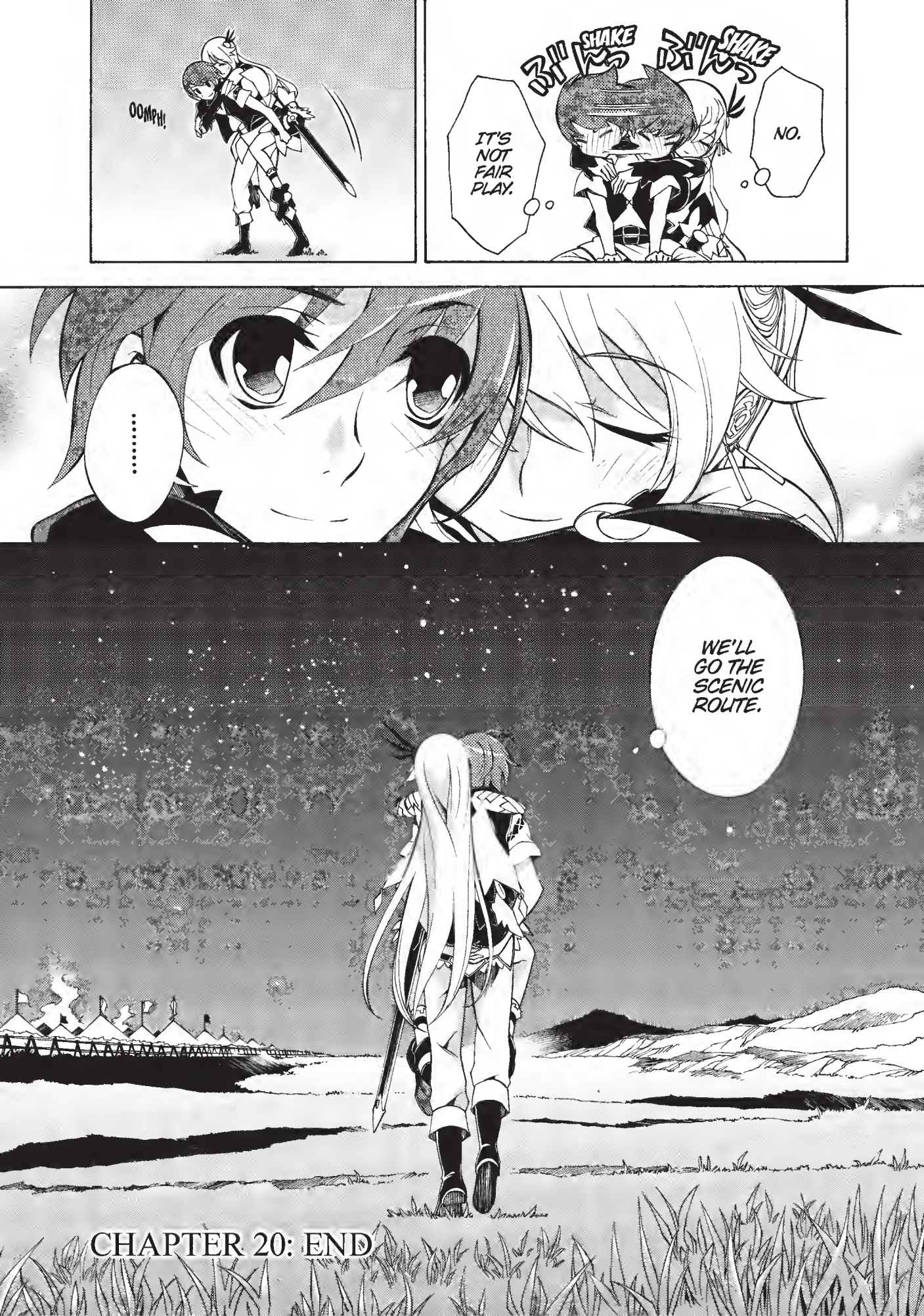
FEW MEN IN YOUR SHOES WOULD ADAPT SO GRACEFULLY.
YOU OUGHT TO BE PROUD.
YOU NEEDN'T THANK ME FOR IT.
LIM ...
SHOULD WE HEAD BACK?
I'M SOBERING UP.
YUP.
SHE'LL SAY NOT TO WANDER OFF ALONE...
AND THAT, AS COMMANDER, I OUGHT TO DRINK SPARINGLY.
LET'S STEAL A BIT MORE TIME.
LIM WILL NAG IF I HEAD BACK NOW.
.....

BUT...
OOF!
IF SHE IGNORED YOU, YOU'D BE HURT.
YOU...
LOOM.
SHOULDN'T BE A KNOW-IT-ALL!
GWONK
AGH!
SQUIDGE
BLULUSH

ALL ...
RIGHT!
YOU'RE DRUNK!
STOP! I GIVE UP!
YOU KNOW, WHEN GREAST SHOOK MY HAND...
YOUR EXPRES-SION WAS JUST BEASTLY.
YOU LOOKED READY TO STRANGLE HIM.
WERE YOU JEALOUS?
I WOULD'VE CLOCKED HIM, GIVEN THE CHANCE.
TEE HEE!
YOU'RE SO SWEET.

.....
.....
YOUR SHOULDERS ARE BROADER THAN I THOUGHT.
MIND IF WE LINGER A BIT LONGER?
"TOP TO BOTTOM."
"WE'RE MIS-MATCHED.
.....
"DO YOU LOVE HIM...?"

SHE NODDED OFF.
ELEN ...?
THROB
THROB
THROB
THROB



CHAPTER 20: END

21 ◆ SOFY'S PROMISE

WELL DONE, ELEN.
ONE SHOULD USE ONE'S ULTIMATE TECHNIQUE WISELY.
PARTICULARLY SUPERNATURAL POWERS LIKE LEY ADMOS.
YOU MUST CHOOSE WHEN TO APPLY IT...
AS RELIANCE ON SUCH POWERS MAY WEAKEN ONE'S MIND AND SKILLS.
SUPPOSE ...
IT SAVES YOUR ENTIRE ARMY!
THEN...
THEY'LL STOP RESPECTING YOU...
AND ADMIRE YOUR ABILITIES INSTEAD.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE HAD THAT DREAM...
JOLT
AND AGES SINCE I'VE SEEN SASHA.

WHEN WE FOUGHT GANELON'S ARMY, YOU SIGHTED THEM FIRST.
YOU'RE TO BE REWARDED FOR YOUR KEEN EYE.
HAVE YOU ANY REQUESTS?
YOU KNOW THAT WON'T WORK.
NEW FOES COULD SPRING UP ANYTIME.
.....
WELL ...
IT'D BE NICE TO BLOW OFF STEAM IN TOWN.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN MY TRIP TO THE VILLAGE OF SAUNIER?
A FEW LOCAL MAYORS ARE CONVENING THERE.
HMM.
IF YOU'LL STAY OUT OF TROUBLE, PERHAPS YOU COULD COME ALONG TO SAUNIER.
YES!
REALLY ?!
SURE.
BRING THEM ALONG. IT MIGHT INSPIRE THEIR FELLOW SOLDIERS.
THANKS, VISCOUNT.

FL-
FL-
FLAP...
A HALL IN SAUNIER.
CHEEP
CHEEP...
CHEEP...
NOTHING NEW FROM THE PALACE.
MEETING ADJOURNED.
THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY.
NO BLOW-UPS YET...
YES.
CLOMP
CLOMP
VERY WELL.
DON'T LET ME HOLD UP YOUR RETURN TO CAMP.

HEY!
IT'S SIR TIGRE AND RURICK!
HA HA!
AH, IT'S YOU.
HAVING A GOOD TIME?
WE'RE ABOUT TO GO VISIT A BROTHEL.
WANNA COME?
A... BROTH-EL?
REALLY?
THEY'VE GOT ONE HERE?
SO IT SEEMS. WE SAW A SIGN PAINTED WITH THE LUST GODDESS YARITO.
COULDN'T MISS IT.
THANKS, BUT...
RUMPLE
NO THANKS.
.....

SEE? TOLD YOU.
SIR TIGRE'S A NOBLEMAN DESPITE HIS LOOKS.
YES, INDEED!
BE-SIDES, HE'S GOT MISS TITTA.
KEEP MUM ABOUT THAT AROUND CAPTAIN LIM!
I HEAR THAT BANSHEE RIPPED OUT HIS HAIR FOR OVERSLEEPING!
MEN...
DO YOU TRULY WANT TO WASTE THIS TRIP AT A BROTHEL?
RAKE
RAKE
IT SEEMS TO ME I SHOULDN'T ALLOW SUCH VICE IN MY ARMY.
HANG ON!
.....
WELL...
I'M IN A QUIET MOOD. EXCUSE ME.
SHF

AHEM!
NOW, LISTEN. KEEP OUT OF MISCHIEF.
UNDER-STOOD?
KA-CHING!!
RURICK, KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS.
ZA-
ZWOOSH
YES, SIR!
.....!
CLIP-CLOP
CLIP-CLOP

THE RIVER'S CLOSE.
KA-CLOP
KA-CLOP
HOO- HOOT!
CHIRRUP! CHIRRUP!
SPLISH
SPLSH SPLSH-SH
SOME-THING'S OUT THERE!
PLSH
SZOMM...
PWISH PWISH
?!
FLAP FLAP FLAP

WHOA ...!
DWAACK
!
A BABY DRAGON?
KYUU!!
WHINNY!
EASY!
KYUU! KYUU!
WAIT... IS THAT YOU, LUNIE?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
K-KYUU!
?!
LUUU-NIE...?
FLINCH
HEY!
KYUU... KYUU...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
ブル ブル
QUIVER QUIVER
ブルブル...
QUIVER...

LUUUUU-
NIE...

UH...!
AH!
UM...!
WAI...
GWUNK
DASH
LUUUU-
NIE!!
WH--?!
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
LOOK O...!
DWUMPP

OH MY!
EXCUSE ME!

HOW WILL WE EVER FIND LUNIE IN ALL THIS DARK?
THAT VOICE...
GRUSTLE
RUSTLE
OH NO!
WHERE ARE YOU, SOFY?
I...
BSHH
I'M FINE...
COULD YOU... COVER UP...?
RUSTLE
UM...
HI.
OH.

SILVER METEOR FORCE'S CAMP...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
IN THE COM-MANDER'S TENT.
ACCIDENT OR NOT...
TIGRE'S VERY CARELESS.
YOU SCHEMED US OUT OF AN AMBUSH! HOW CAN YOU BE THIS DENSE?
ANY CUTE ASSASSIN WOULD MAKE SHORT WORK OF YOU.
.....
OH, LORD TIGRE.

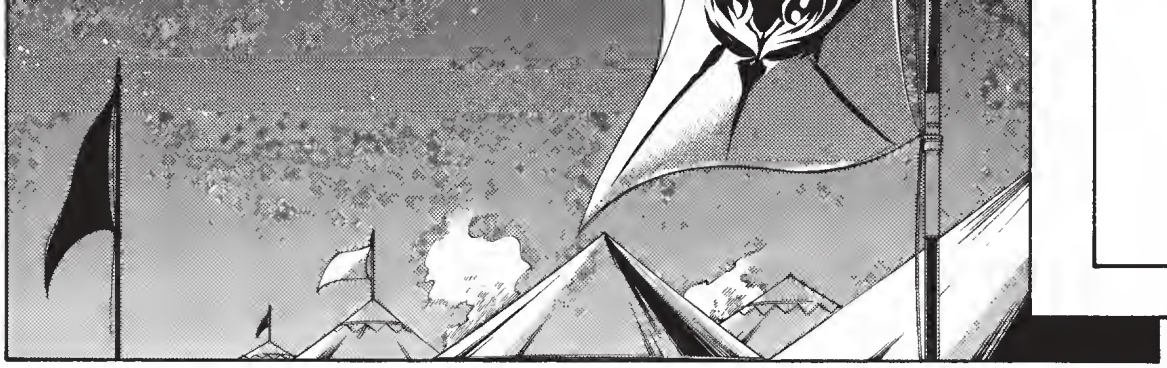
HELLO, SIR TIGRE-VURMUD.
I'M SOFYA OBERTAS, MASTER OF THE PRIESTESS STAFF.
DO CALL ME SOFY.
KYU..
I'M TIGRE-VURMUD VORN.
SORRY FOR... WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER.
OH, MY!
I OUGHT TO THANK YOU.
REALLY, YOU BROKE MY FALL!
YOU'RE TOO KIND...

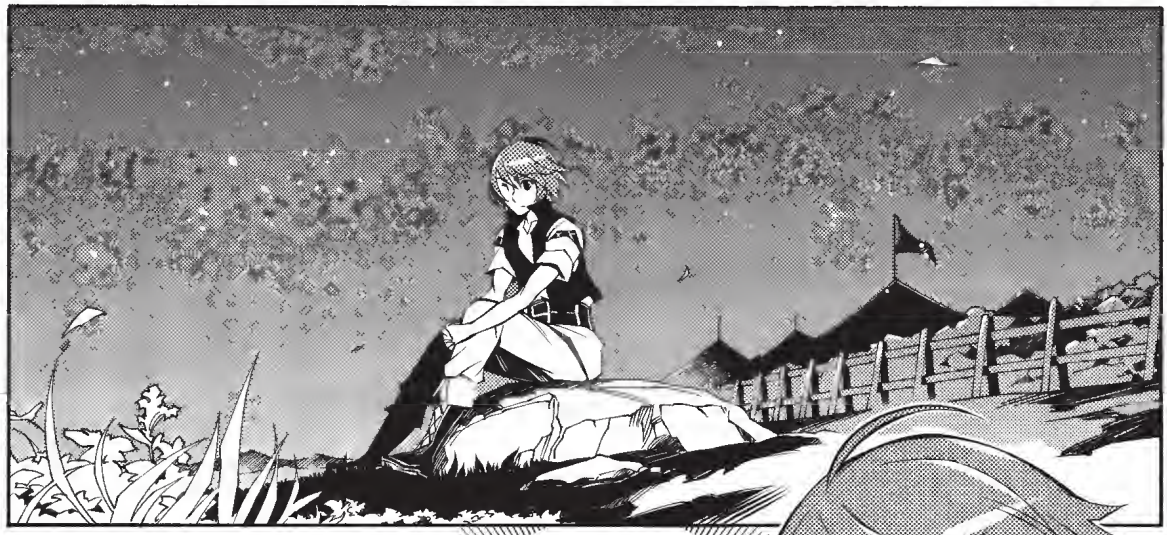
NOW, THEN ...
WHAT'S BROUGHT YOU HERE, SOFY?
SHE HASN'T SAID?
YOU ONLY JUST MISSED HER ARRIVAL.
SHE FELT YOU SHOULD ATTEND OUR MEETING, SO WE THOUGHT WE'D PASS THE TIME WITH A BATH.
TEE HEE!
CUDDLE
DID YOU HAVE TO BRING LUNIE?
HON-EST-LY.
SQUEE!
WHAT?
YOU SAID SHE WAS MINE FOR NOW!
I'VE COME ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS.
BRUNE'S SILENCE HAS EXHAUSTED OUR KING.
I'M HIS PERSONAL ENVOY TO THEIR PALACE.

OF COURSE.
BUT YOU WON'T LIKE IT.
SOFY ...
IF IT'S NO TROUBLE, PERHAPS...
YOU MIGHT TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE HEARD?
HE'S HOT-HEADED AS EVER.
WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND DONE...
MY VISIT DIDN'T GO WELL.
I COULD ONLY EXPLAIN OUR POSITION.
WHEN I FINALLY SPOKE TO PRIME MINISTER BAUDOUIN...
THEY SAID HE WAS ILL.
I WAS BARRED FROM SEEING THE KING.

BY "OUR POSITION" ...
DO YOU MEANT ZHCTED'S OVERALL NEUTRALITY, DESPITE MY HELPING TIGRE?
YES.
THEY SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT, OFFICIALLY.
OH, AND ALSO ...
HE GAVE ELEN A MESSAGE FOR SIR TIGRE-VURMUD.
"THE TREASON CHARGES AGAINST COUNT VORN SHALL SEE HIM STRIPPED OF HIS TITLE AND PRIVILEGES.
"ALSACE WILL PROVISIONALLY BE UNDER THE KING'S JURISDICTION."

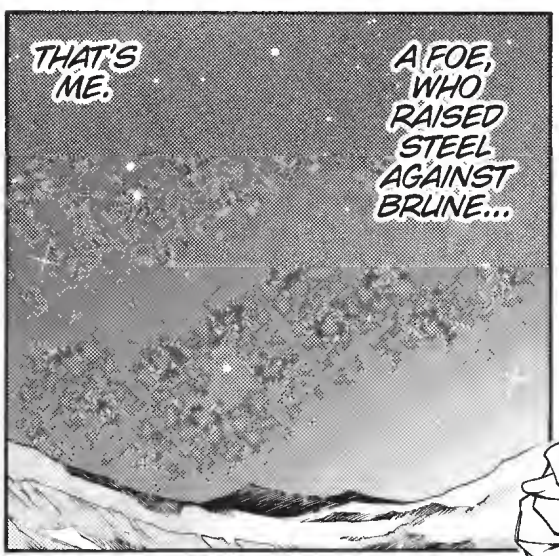
TREASON ...
IF YOU'D LIKE DETAILS...
YOU OUGHT TO ASK SIR MASHAS.
YOU KNOW SIR MASHAS ?!
YES!
WE MET IN NICE.
I THOUGHT I'D COME ALONG...
WHEN HE MENTIONED HE'D VISIT YOU AFTER STOPPING AT HOME IN AUDE.
I SUPPOSE HE'LL ARRIVE TOMORROW AFTER-NOON.





THAT WAS SOFY'S BEST NEWS.

SIR MASHAS IS SAFE.



SWISH
GUESS WHO?
BLINK
I WON'T JUST GIVE UP.
MY ACTIONS PROTECTED ALSACE AND MY PEOPLE.
CLASP
NONE CAN DENY THAT!
S...
SOFY?
TITTER TITTER!
WELL...
FEW SPEAK WITH SUCH DISTINCT CHARM.
TOO EASY, I SUPPOSE.
MY, MY!
SHARP EARS.
SHE CREPT UP IN TOTAL SILENCE.
SHUDDER

PERHAPS YOU CAN TELL ME SOMETHING...
SWISH!
SHA-
RAANG!
HOW DO YOU...
FEEL ABOUT ELEN?

ELEN SAVED ...
MY LIFE.
SHE'S MY COMRADE.
SHAA-
RIING
COMRADE?
YOU MEAN YOU DON'T RESENT HER?
RESENT HER?
SHE DID IMPRISON YOU.
BUT SHE ALSO AIDED MY BATTLE...

ELEN'S A VALUABLE FRIEND.
AS A WAR MAIDEN ...
AND A CONFI-DANTE.
YOU SEEM QUITE EARNEST.
I'M RELIEVED.
THAT'S WHY, IF I FELT HER HEART HAD LED HER INTO PERIL...
I'D HAVE BROUGHT HER HOME BY FORCE.
SHA-
I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING...
RAAANG
IF YOU HADN'T MEASURED UP.

SST
NOW...
I SUPPOSE I'LL SIMPLY TRUST YOU.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF ELEN.
I WILL.
YOU HAVE MY WORD.

THANK YOU.

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO VISIT.
NOR DID I.
IF I HADN'T BUMPED INTO SIR MASHAS, I'D HAVE RETURNED TO ZHCTED.
WELL ...?
DID YOU HAVE ANY LUCK?
YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE FAVOR YOU ASKED BACK AT THE PALACE?
MM-HMM.

ALSO ...
DUKE THENARDIER SEEMS TO KNOW A DRAGON-TAMER.
COULD YOU CHECK ON THAT?
COULD YOU FIND...
WAR MAIDENS, OR POWERFUL NOBLES, WHO SUPPORT DUKES THENARDIER AND GANELON?
LOOKING AHEAD...
I'LL NEED A FAVOR.
AS TO VALENTINA, I CAN'T SAY YET.
ELIZABETA'S DEEPLY ENTRENCHED WITH BOTH DUKES.
LET'S BEGIN WITH THE WAR MAIDENS.
SHE AND HER DRAGON GEAR VANISHED. SHE LEFT A NOTE SAYING SHE WAS ON A VOYAGE.
AND OLGA IS MISSING.
MISSING?
WHO KNOWS?
REMEMBER SASHA'S CASE.
DID HER DRAGON GEAR REJECT HER...?

SASHA...
HAS HER CONDITION IMPROVED?
I'M AFRAID IT HASN'T.
BUT... SHE'S NO WORSE, EITHER.
I SUP-POSE.
SHE'LL BE FINE...
I MUST APOLO-GIZE.
NOTHING'S TURNED UP REGARDING THENARDIER'S DRAGON TAMER.
I SEE.
THIS ALL HELPS.
THANK YOU.

OH...
YOU MEAN TIGRE.
FAITHFUL.
HONEST.
BY THE BY...
HE'S RATHER SWEET...
HM?
HOW UNUSUAL.
BE FORE-WARNED...
I'M ANXIOUS TO GET TO KNOW HIM.
AND ...
DESPITE THAT PRETTY FACE, HE'LL COME THROUGH FOR YOU.
YOUR CHOICE TO HELP HIM MAKES SENSE, NOW.
HE'S MINE.
CAN'T I JUST BORROW HIM? IF I DIRTY HIM UP, I'LL BE SURE TO BATHE HIM BEFORE BRINGING HIM BACK.
PAWS OFF!

PLOSH
PLOSH
チチ…
CH-CHEEP
チチチ…
CH-CH-CHEEP
THE NEXT MORNING.
PHEW.
IF SOFY GUESSED RIGHT, SIR MASHAS SHOULD ARRIVE TODAY.
YOUNG LORD!
HAAH!
HAAH...!
BER-TRAND ...?!
WHAT IS IT?!

※ One belsta is about one mile.

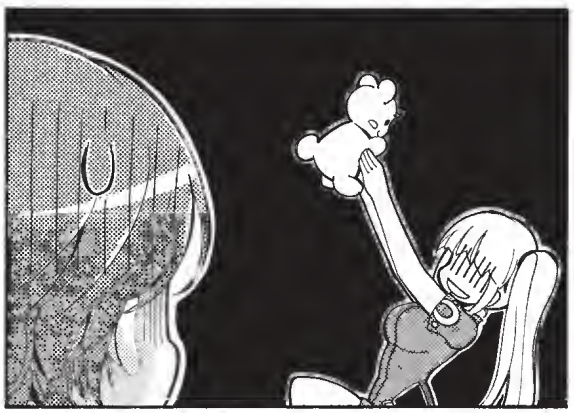
CHAPTER 21: END

TO BE CONTINUED...

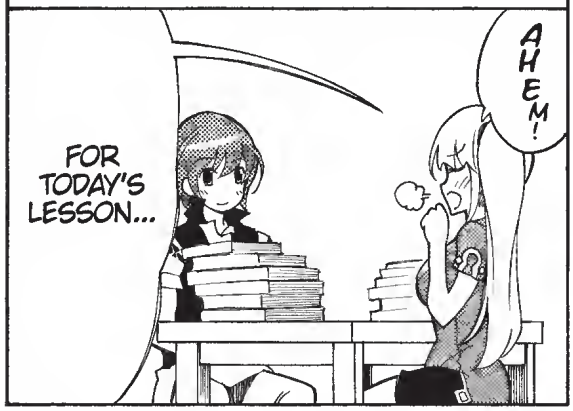
LORD MARKSMAN AND VANADIS

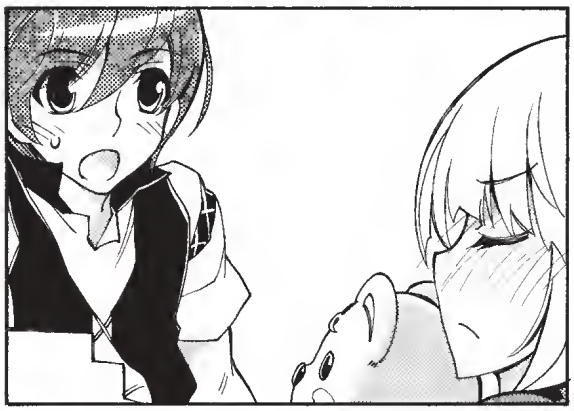
THE 4-KOMA ADVENTURES!!!

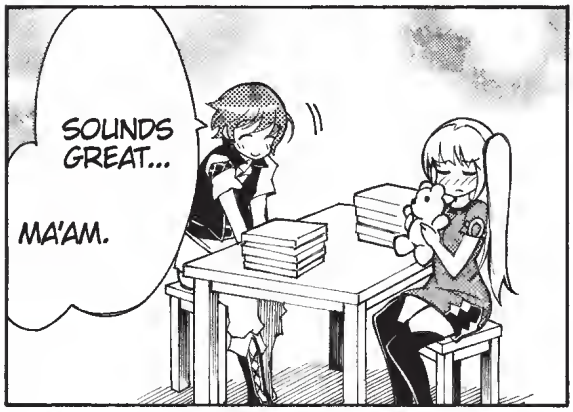
LIM'S SECRET: PART 1



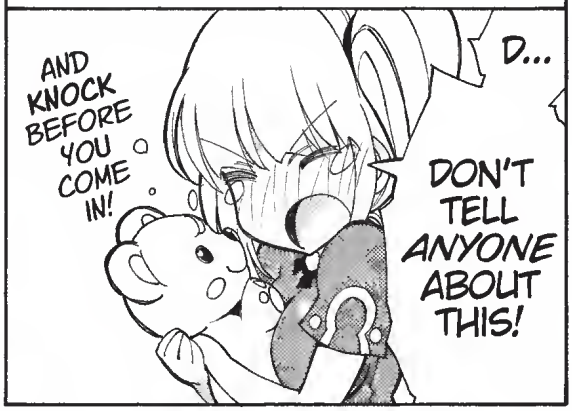
LIM'S SECRET: PART 3

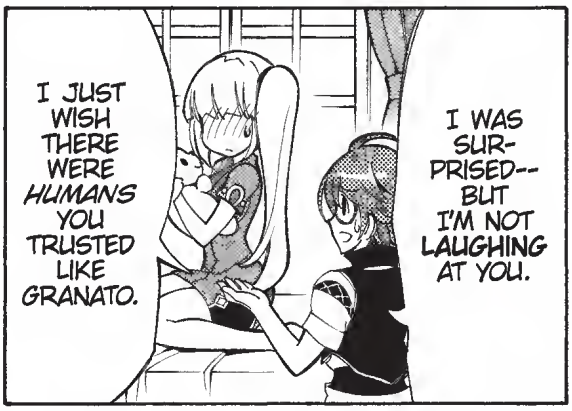


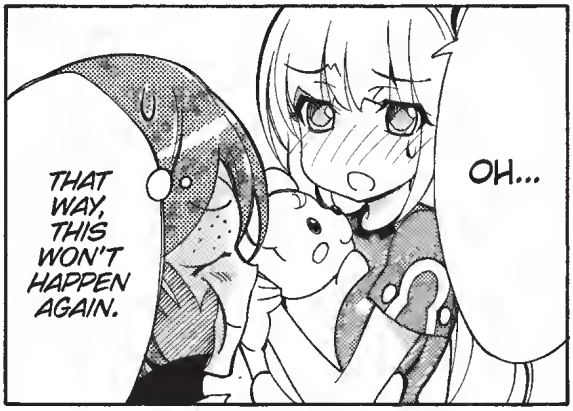




LIM'S SECRET: PART 2







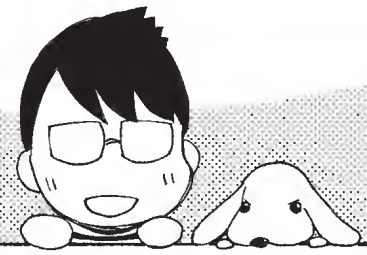
AT A TAVERN: PART 1
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, RURICK?
HIC!
SHLAM
WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE ?!
SIR TIGRE-VUR-MUD!
AT A TAVERN: PART 2
I'M JUST A BRUNISH CAPTIVE.
TELL ME, WHY DO YOU SERVE ME WILLINGLY?
BFFT!!
I MEAN, LIM OR TITTA?!
I HAD BEEN LEITMERITZ'S BEST ARCHER. MEETING YOU HUMBLED ME...
QUITE SIMPLY, YOU OPENED MY EYES.
YOU EVEN SAVED MY LIFE.
AND SO...
NOT PLACING WAGERS, I HOPE...?
THE SOLDIERS ARE BUZZING ABOUT IT.
THAT'S QUITE THE GAMBLE.
I'M PUTTING MY MONEY ON TITTA AND LIM!
IS THERE A BETTING POOL ...?
I'M THINKING OF PUTTING MONEY ON FIVE DIFFERENT GIRLS. BUT I GOTTA NARROW IT DOWN... TITTA OR LIM? I CAN'T DECIDE!

GRR!
I DON'T GET A SINGLE LINE?!
THE END!
SMIRK
YOU'LL "BATHE HIM IF HE GETS DIRTY"? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
SMIRK
W...
WELL ...?
WHAT ...
ARE YOU PLOTTING?
SMIRK
SHIVER

AFTERWORD

THANKS FOR BUYING OUR FOURTH VOLUME!

HEY, STRANGERS. YANAI HERE.



HOO RAAA AAY!!

Hip! Hip! Hip!

WOO HOO——!!

GUESS WHAT? THEY'RE MAKING AN ANIME OF *LORD MARKSMAN AND VANADIS!*

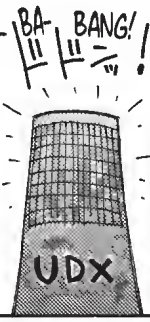
I WENT TO WATCH THE ANNOUNCE-MENT MYSELF.

MY EDITOR TOLD ME IN ADVANCE.

CAN I GO? CAN I GO?!

UH, SURE.

EDITOR



BA-BANG!

UDX

I NEVER GUESSED SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN TO ME.

IT WAS A BIG MOMENT: GETTING THE **GREEN LIGHT** ON THE ANIME FOR A LIGHT NOVEL I WORKED ON!

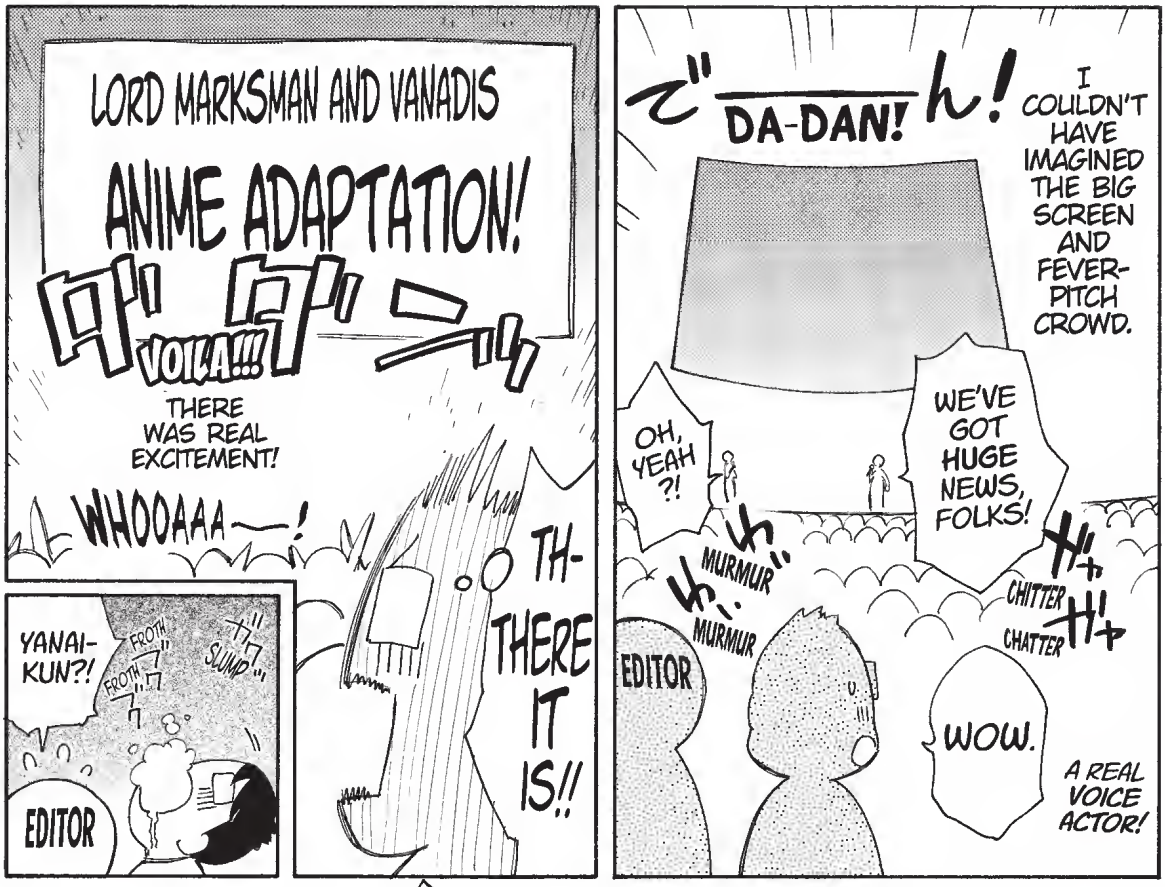
AT AKIHABARA UDX.

MF BUNKO J HOLDS AN ANNUAL "SUMMER SCHOOL FESTIVAL."

THEY ANNOUNCED THAT FIVE HIT TITLES--INCLUDING, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, *VANADIS*--WILL GET **ANIME ADAPTATIONS!**

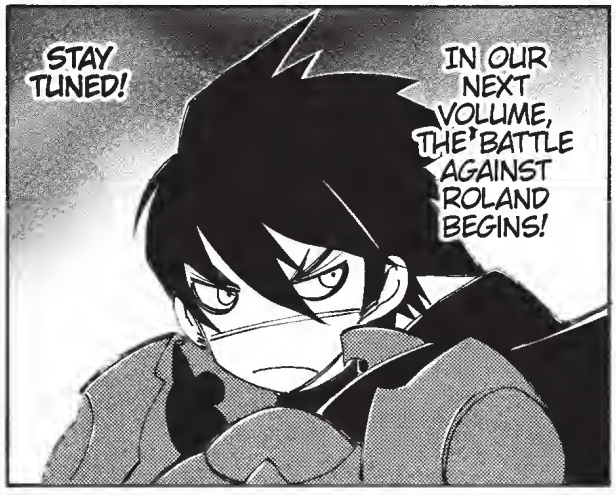
COOL BEANS!

AMAZING, HUH?



My staff and family

Special thanks:
Tsukasa Kawaguchi-sensei,
Yoshi☆wo-sensei,
Yamada Koutarou-sensei,
Kajiyama-san, Hamada-kun,
my editor, I-buchi-san,
and my readers!



SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Lord Marksman and Vanadis VOL. 4

original story by **TSUKASA KAWAGUCHI** / art by **NOBUHIKO YANAI** / character design by **YOSHI☆WO**

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LORD MARKSMAN AND VANADIS VOL. 4
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ISBN: 978-1-626925-01-4

Printed in Canada

First Printing: July 2017

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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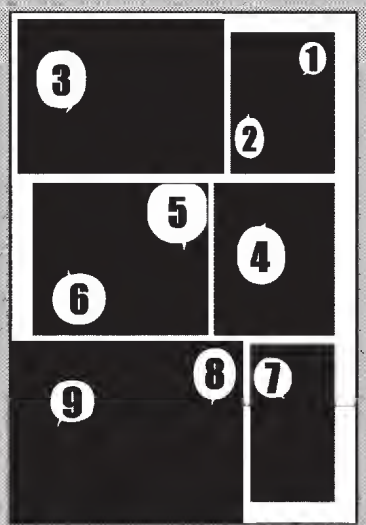
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



THE WAR RAGES ON

Tigre and Elen's Silver Meteor Force struggles against the scheming dukes, who want to exploit Brune's civil war. Marquis Greast pays Tigre's camp a visit with an offer from Duke Ganelon, but when Tigre refuses, the Meteor Force is thrust into a hard-fought battle. Meanwhile, the Order of Navarre's formidable knight, Roland, is on the hunt for a traitor—the head of the Vorn clan, Tigrevurmud!

Rated: TEEN

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